

CARDS

COINS

ROPES

STAGE

MAGIC

MENTAL

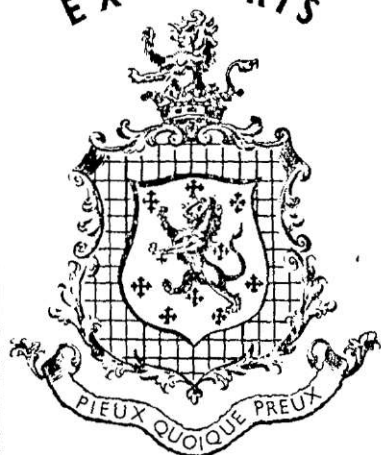
TRICKS



Conjuring
with
Christopher

CONJURING WITH CHRISTOPHER

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CONJURING WITH CHRISTOPHER

*A CHOICE COLLECTION OF MAGIC WITH COINS, CARDS,
THIMBLES, SILKS, ROPES, ETC., PLUS A CHAPTER ON MENTAL
MAGIC . . . AND A VARIETY OF FEATS FOR THE STAGE.*

By

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For MAURINE
to whom the explanations
were as baffling
as the tricks.

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Introduction

At first thought it appears strange that, with few exceptions, the leading textbooks on conjuring have been written by amateur magicians and not by professionals. The earliest of the modern books on the art of magic were written by two French authors, Decremps and Ponsin, both of whom were amateurs. Much later the finest work extant on pure sleight of hand was written by their countryman, Gaultier, also an amateur magician. Of the English books on the subject those by Professor Hoffman and Edwin Sachs, both of whom practiced magic solely as amateurs, have become classics. Quite recently another book, "The Fine Art of Magic" by George G. Kaplan, has continued the tradition.

The reason, however, for the rarity of textbooks by professional magicians is fairly obvious. The life of the professional is a strenuous one. Not only has he to give his performances, he has to attend to the very serious business of making his magic pay for his bread and butter. The glamour of his stage show is made possible only by strict attention to the thousand and one details of booking dates, advertising, travelling, setting up and packing, etc. Even if he had the inclination, he has little leisure for indulging in literary work.

To overcome these difficulties a rare combination of talents is required, together with an enormous capacity for hard work. Milbourne Christopher has this combination. Not only is he in the front rank as an entertaining magician but also as a writer. A wizard with the pen as well as the wand, he has the rare talent of being able to describe the most intricate problems clearly yet concisely. With a few words he gets to the root of the matter so lucidly that his explanations can be followed with ease by the merest tyro, and he has the happy knack of making his writing entertaining. Here is no dry-as-dust technician, but a writer who knows how to make his material interesting.

In addition to the books he has already published, and the very numerous articles he has contributed to other magical journals, Mr. Christopher has written a full page of magic every month for "Hugard's Magic Monthly." Under the heading of "Milbourne Christopher's Column," this page has appeared without a break for the past four years. Consisting, as it does, of original magic, covering tricks, tips and routines, his column has become famous as the best of its kind in magical literature. A few of the best of these items are reproduced in this volume, but the bulk of the book consists of new material.

In this book, as in his performances, Mr. Christopher uses only magic which is entertaining. He has no time nor space for the technical perfections so dear to the heart of the "expert" but so boring to audiences. Here he gives us only gems of delightful magic designed to brighten the programs of magicians who adopt them.

Special attention should be given to the two articles on "Practice" and "Routining". These are vital matters to which little attention has been paid in the past. The reader will do well to study them carefully.

That Mr. Christopher may continue for a long time to come to delight us with his brilliant magic and his equally brilliant writings is the sincere wish of

JEAN HUGARD

*"Until a magician knows a trick
so well that he is always ready
to do it when called upon, he
does not really know it."*

DAVID DEVANT

Practice

Advice on medicine bottles often reads, "Shake well before using." Each trick in this book could well bear a label, "Practice well before performing."

Only when the magician can do his magic so smoothly that the actual performing is second nature can he concentrate fully on the presentation.

Even the simplest of tricks must be rehearsed dozens of times, preferably before a mirror. See the feat as others will see it before you demonstrate it publicly.

When you have the details mastered, when you can do a trick without pausing to remember what comes next, you are ready for a test performance.

The first time you show a trick you will learn much about it that didn't occur to you during the practice sessions. You will get a definite audience reaction. The late brilliant English illusionist, Oswald Williams, would wheel out a new illusion with the paint scarcely dry. If it didn't go across the first time, he would scrap it.

Most magicians are more patient. If a flaw develops in a mystery, they will re-work it and try it again — and again until they have it under control.

Be natural in your presentations. Be confident, but don't over act. Professional magicians generally write out patter for their tricks and memorize it. Thurston was an exception. He would perfect a new mystery, then show it saying whatever came into his mind on the stage. He found that through many shows his patter developed naturally. Once he "found" appropriate lines he would use them thereafter.

Many close-up performers prefer not to memorize their trick talk. They find an easy conversational approach works best. They vary their patter to fit each audience and occasion.

If you wish to perform smoothly, you must perform frequently. Repetition brings a polish that can be acquired in no other way.

If you have any doubt about a remark or gesture which may be offensive to your onlookers, don't use it.

Some magicians work more effectively with little or no talk; others capitalize on their sprightly remarks. Some performers offer their mysteries solemnly; others toss them off lightly. You will soon learn your best method of presentation.

See as many good magicians as you possibly can. Don't ape their manners or appropriate their patter, but study why they do what they do and apply what you learn to your own performance.

Note especially their entrances and exits, how they signal that an effect is over, how they acknowledge their applause. See several different types of performers, however, before you jump to conclusions.

The most adroit wizard in the world if he lacks a winning manner will fare poorly beside a conjuror of less skill but more personality.

Remember your first task is to entertain your audience and present your magic accordingly.

Don't be afraid to smile. Show your onlookers that you like them and the odds are that they will like you.

Intimate Trickery

I have seen a good-natured dramatic critic yawn while Blackstone ran a buzz-saw through a lovely assistant during his stage show, then later the same evening watch with unconcealed amazement as the lively, gray wizard turned deuces to aces across the table in his hotel room.

Trap doors, special lights and ingenious mechanisms are responsible for stage illusions John Q. Public believes, but when a magician performs tricks right under his nose, Mr. Public is at a loss for an explanation.

The average spectator is sure that the closer he stands to a magic trick, the more chance he has to see how it is done. He further is confident that if he were in the theater wings he could follow every feat with all the razzle dazzle stripped away.

Little wonder then that close-up illusions are so effective.

Adding to the enchantment of intimate performing is the fact that the wizard can do his deceptive work with borrowed articles or everyday appliances.

TAG TRICKERY

Frequently those who see magic at close quarters, wish to examine the objects used by the magician, especially if they think there is a chance of discovering some hidden secret.

The five colored tags which play a part in this bit of wizardry may be thoroughly scrutinized before, during and after the performance.

You may rest assured that no thinking performer will allow his audience to handle any item which will cause him embarrassment.

In this bit of hocus-pocus, the performer passes five different colored shipping tags to an onlooker with the request that he mix and return them.

With the cards in his hands behind him, the wizard asks his audience to name any of the colors. Upon request he produces the tag called for—until five colors have been called out. He then repeats the trick a second time.

Method—The five tags are all identical except for color. They have no identifying marks. How then can you produce each color on demand?

Slipped in your trouser belt on the rear side are two matching sets of tags. You know the color order of each set.

When the shuffled tags are handed to you behind your back, turn around facing the audience.

As you outline what you are about to do, unobtrusively lift your coat, slip the shuffled tags under your belt and remove one of the other sets.

As the colors are called for, bring them out with your right hand, keeping your left hand and the other tags behind your back.

When you repeat the test, use the other group of five.

The most delightful part of this routine is watching your audience attempt, to find out how it is done by examining the tags.

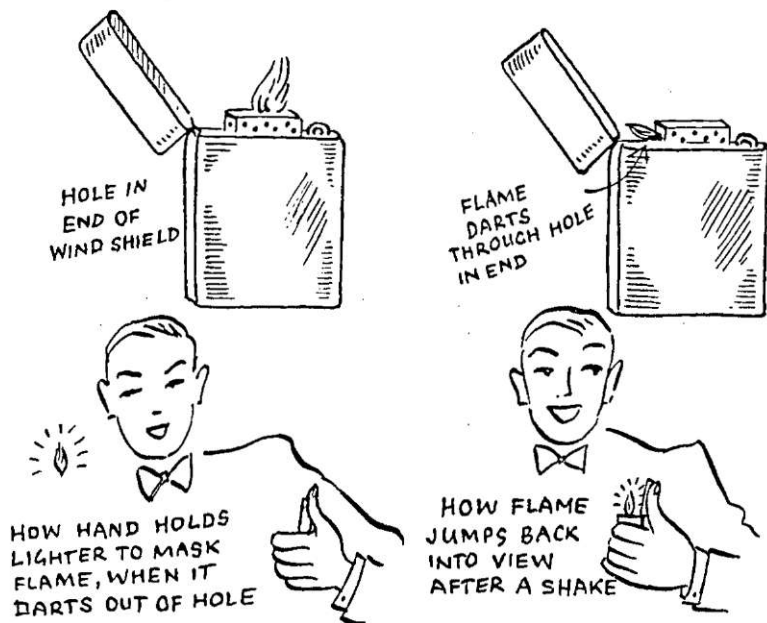
Rectangular pieces of colored cardboard may be used instead of shipping tags, or if you prefer, use playing cards.

The more you emphasize the importance of your supersensitive touch, the further your onlookers will be from discovering the actual secret.

THE PHANTOM FLAME

Eddie Roberts, who with his wife, Lucille, presents a wonderful telepathy routine showed me this stunt between shows at the Hotel Pierre in New York.

Eddie lit his cigarette lighter, then reached for the flame with his right



hand. It blinked out. He looked about ten inches away from the lighter, extended his hand until it was at that point, then pantomimed picking up the flame and replacing it. As he touched the lighter the flame jumped back into view.

Method — This clever close-up effect is possible only with a Park lighter. This lighter has a wind shelter around the wick. The wind shelter contains a small hole in one end.

When you reach for the flame, your fingers on the top of the wind shelter cut off the air from above and the flame darts horizontally out of the small hole in the side. When you lift your fingers from the top, no flame is visible.

Pantomime picking up the fire and replacing it.

A slight shake of the lighter sends the flame shooting up in normal fashion.

You might have to play around with the lighter ten or fifteen minutes before you get the hang of the trick, but once you acquire the knack it is child's play to perform.

THE ACROBATIC CIGARETTE

An excellent introduction to a series of table tricks is this baffler with a borrowed cigarette.

The magician puts the cigarette flat on the palm of his right hand. He waves a borrowed match over it. Slowly the cigarette rises and stands on end, then it continues in an arc in the opposite direction until once again it is lengthwise on the performer's palm.

Immediately, without a single false move, the wizard's hand, the cigarette and the match are offered for inspection — but there is no clue to the mystery.

Method — A small black straight pin is tied to one end of a twelve inch length of thread, and a safety pin is tied to the other.

The safety pin is fastened to your trousers just above the right hand pocket. The straight pin is pinned by the side of your lower right vest pocket.

When ready to perform, get the straight pin in your right hand inconspicuously and ask for a cigarette.

Take the proffered cigarette in your left hand and bring it toward your right hand. Ask for a match.

As the spectator reaches for a match, shove the straight pin down in the center of the cigarette. Then with your left hand place the cigarette on your right hand as shown in the illustration. Your arm hides the thread which runs between your fingers to your body.

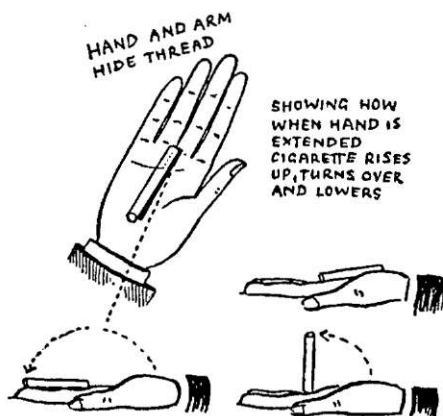
Take the match in your left hand and wave it over the cigarette. When you wish the cigarette to rise, move your body away from your hand, NOT your hand from your body. This slight movement will cause the thread to pull the cigarette upright.

To make the cigarette continue its motion, move your body further away and the cigarette will continue its arc until it reaches your fingers.

Now by merely extending your hand to the spectator closest by, you draw the pin out of the cigarette and away by the thread.

This release of the motivating power is absolutely undetectable as you will find by experimentation.

Thus at the trick's conclusion, hand, match and cigarette may be examined thoroughly by the spectator.



THE NAME APPEARS

The performer tears a sheet of paper into eight pieces.

"Name several American presidents", he suggests. As the chief executives are called out, he jots them down on the torn slips.

He folds each paper in quarters, then puts it in his right coat pocket.

"Reach in and mix them", he invites, holding his pocket open. A kind spectator obliges.

"Please select one". He turns away while the chosen slip is opened and read.

"Crumple the paper and set it afire", commands the magician.

He takes a cigarette, shows it freely, then lights it from the burning paper. The paper is reduced to ashes. He takes a pinch and rubs it lengthwise along his cigarette. He lifts his fingers.

Lo and behold, there on the cigarette — in boldly printed letters — is the proper president's name!

Method — Previous to your performance tear one of two matching sheets

of paper into eight pieces. Write on each the name you intend to conjure up on your cigarette. I suggest "Washington" or "Roosevelt" as few Americans will name eight presidents without mentioning these two. Fold the papers in quarters and put them in your right coat pocket.

Write the name lengthwise on your cigarette in ink in letters about an eighth of an inch high. Put this in your left coat pocket.

As far as the spectators are concerned the trick begins when you casually tear the second sheet of paper into eight strips. Write the presidential names as they are called and fold the papers to match those in your pocket.

If the name you have prepared isn't called out by the sixth slip, casually suggest the name yourself and write it down.

Put these pieces in your right coat pocket, not in the bottom with the others, but in the small change pocket which most tailors thoughtfully make in men's suits.

Now comes a neat move.

Spread the pocket with both hands so the papers may be mixed and a slip selected. With your left hand press the change pocket against your body, your hand covering it completely. With your right thumb, pull open the side of the pocket.

The only papers the spectator can reach are those bearing the president of your choice.

When one of the eight slips has been chosen, turn away and allow your volunteer helper to read the name to himself.

Take out the prepared cigarette. Hold it at the tips of your right thumb and fingers. Be sure that the writing side is down, out of view, when you show the cigarette.

Though the onlookers later think they have seen both sides of the cigarette, you show a single side twice in this manner. As you turn your hand to display the underside, roll the cigarette slightly to the left with the thumb. The side now visible is the one that was shown as the top. Bring your hand back to its original position and reverse the move, shifting the writing again to the bottom.

Light the cigarette with the burning, selected slip. Take a puff or two, then rub the ashes of the paper along its length. Under cover of the rubbing motion, roll the cigarette over until the writing is brought to the top.

When you lift your fingers, the president's name appears.

THE MAGIC MIRROR

How often we hear baffled spectators say "It's up your sleeve", "The hand is quicker than the eye", or "it's done with mirrors".

The following feat uses these three cliches as a basis for its presentation.

The performer shows a small round pocket mirror and has a spectator place an identifying mark on the reverse side.

The mirror is covered with a handkerchief and passed to a spectator so that he may hold it through the cloth.

"This is one trick that is actually done with a mirror", the wizard explains, "furthermore in a few seconds I will prove that the hand is quicker than the eye and that it's 'up my sleeve' as the saying goes."

He taps the covered mirror with a pencil to call attention and show that it's still there, then he slips a rubber band over each hand to fasten the lower ends of his sleeves.

The performer takes a corner of the cloth which covers the mirror and pulls it away from the spectator's grasp. The mirror has vanished.

"The hand is quicker than the eye", the wizard laughs. "Despite the fact that I fastened the openings of my sleeves with elastic before the mirror vanished I think you will now find that 'It's up my sleeve'". Making sure the audience sees his hands are empty he removes the rubber band from his right sleeve, tilts his arm and lets the mirror drop out.

The spectator who marked it originally verifies his mark. It is the same mirror.

Method—A small round pocket mirror about one and a half or two inches in diameter is needed. A label is pasted on the reverse side so that later a spectator may mark it. You also need a prepared handkerchief. This has a disc, the same size as the pocket mirror, sewn to one corner. In your pocket are two rubber bands and a pencil.



After the onlooker marks his initials on the back of the mirror, the performer receives it back in his left hand. He removes the prepared handkerchief from his breast pocket and covers the mirror. Under cover of the cloth, the corner that contains the disc is brought to the center of the handkerchief and the right hand grasps this from the outside. Due to its shape it appears to be the mirror.

When his right hand passes the "mirror" to a spectator, who checks to make sure the "mirror" is in the cloth, the magician's left hand, which still retains the mirror, drops naturally to his side.

The left hand reaches inside the coat to the pocket for a pencil and under cover of this action drops the mirror down the right sleeve. This move is a specialty of James Herpick.

As the right arm is bent the mirror can drop only to the elbow.

After the performer taps the covered disc with his pencil, he replaces it in his pocket.

Next he takes the two rubber bands with his left hand and slips one over his lower right sleeve opening, then the other over the lower left sleeve opening.

The mirror at the right elbow falls when the right arm is dropped but the rubber band prevents it from dropping out.

The magician takes a corner of the pocket handkerchief and pulls it quickly away from the spectator's hand with a remark about the hands being quicker than the eye. Apparently the mirror has vanished.

Attention now is directed to the right sleeve. The rubber band is taken away and the mirror is allowed to drop out.

Some performers may prefer to have a spectator fasten the ends of the

sleeves with the rubber bands at the beginning of the trick, then remove them at the finish.

I have referred to a mirror in this description but you may use a coin, cigarette lighter, cigar or a pocket knife. The shape of the piece seen in the corner of your handkerchief must, of course, match the object used.

Should you use any of the objects mentioned above, the effect will be greater if they are borrowed.

The only change in presentation necessary is to delete all reference to mirrors from your patter.

STEEL BALL BAFFLER

Perhaps you've seen the puzzle. A small steel ball rests in a little metal base. You can lift it out by pressing down firmly with your thumb and forefinger, then raising both at the same time, but the other fellow can't.

That is he can't until he finally tumbles to the proper pressure and touch.

It is possible to fool even those in the know with the steel ball, however, by the method I will describe.

Use a small block of wood instead of the metal base. Any half inch steel ball bearing will do for the ball. Bore a hole just deep enough in the block of wood so that the ball can't be lifted by the usual pressure method.

Let your friends try to take the ball out with their fingers. They, of course, must do it without tilting the block or turning it on edge.

You lift the ball whenever you desire, then replace it and let them worry as long as they like trying to duplicate your success.

Method—A tiny Alnico magnet is the lifting agent. Clip it near the tips between your first and second fingers.

With the back of your hand toward your audience, you seem to be using the old tactics. A touch of the magnet and the ball is up and out instantly.

SQUEEZE

The finish of this trick comes as a complete surprise. Hold a two inch round sponge rubber ball in your left hand, close your fingers and tell a spectator to squeeze your hand.

No matter how gently your hand is pressed, shout: "Ouch, that's too much!" Open your hand. The big sponge rubber ball has shrunk to one third its former diameter.

Method—take the large sponge openly from your pocket with your right hand.

This hand also has the small sponge concealed under the curled second, third and fourth fingers.

Put the big sponge on the table. Pick it up between your right thumb and forefinger. Apparently put it in your left hand, but really pull it back with your thumb and let the small concealed sponge drop inside.

Ask a spectator to help by squeezing your hand. As he presses your left closed hand, slip your right hand in the side pocket and get rid of the large sponge.

Make believe the pressure was too great. Let the small sponge ball roll out.

Emmet Barbee, of Oklahoma City, uses a penny for this feat. When his hand is pressed, he lets a penny bent almost in half fall out.

This penny, which previous to the performance is bent in a vice is, of course, switched for the one shown first.

A NEW THIMBLE ROUTINE

The late Nate Leipzig presented an excellent sequence with thimbles during his theater act. Glen Pope used them successfully in night clubs and John Mulholland manipulates them on the lecture platform. By nature, however, thimbles are more suited to intimate conjuring.

Here is a complete close up routine. Four plastic thimbles and a spool of thread are the only properties used. I recommend plastic thimbles because they nest better than metal ones and are easier to handle.

The magician produces a thimble on his right index finger tip. He pushes it into his closed left hand. A squeeze, and he opens his hand to disclose a spool of thread. This he puts on the table or in his pocket.

Another thimble appears on his right index finger tip. This vanishes and reappears several times, then four thimbles appear—one on each finger tip.

They are placed one at a time in the performer's left fist. They vanish and reappear back on his finger tips.

Once more the thimbles are put in his closed left hand. He waves the spool of thread over his fist and then opens it. The thimbles have vanished.

Method—Four plastic thimbles are nested (Fig. 1) and put in the wizard's right trousers pocket. A spool of thread is in his left trousers pocket.

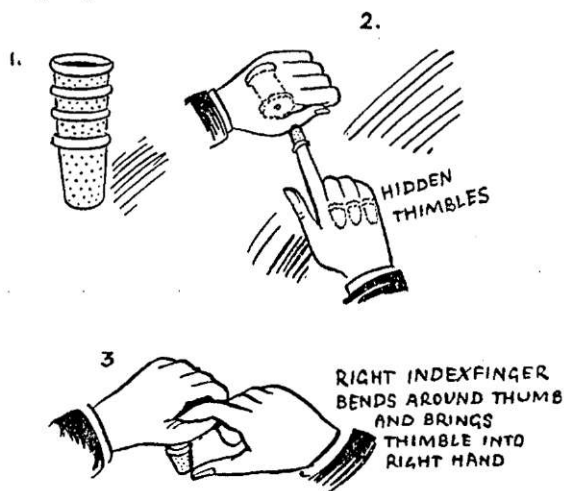
Just prior to showing his thimble routine the performer puts his hands in his pockets. He closes his left hand around the spool and removes it.

He wraps his right fingers around the nest of thimbles in his pocket, then bends his right index finger so that it fits in the uppermost thimble and pulls it from the stack and onto his fingertip.

His thumb aids in the operation by holding the edge of the next uppermost thimble as the top one is removed. The other fingers bend in and each in turn gets a thimble on its tip.

Just before he removes his hand he bends his index finger back and thumb palms its thimble. That is, he holds it in the fork between his thumb and first finger.

This may sound complicated, but the actual doing is a simple matter.



PRODUCTION OF THE FIRST THIMBLE

With his right index finger extended, the other fingers closed, the performer produces a thimble. He does this by quickly bending the index finger, getting the palmed thimble on its tip and straightening it. The other three thimbles are hidden from view by the natural position of the closed fingers.

THIMBLE TO SPOOL

Displaying the thimble on his index finger long enough for the audience to realize it is there, the magician pushes it into his closed left fist, which, as you remember, holds the spool of thread. (Fig. 2)

Instead of guiding the thimble straight into the fist, the right index finger bends it down around the left thumb. The right thumb and second finger take the thimble immediately and carry it away. (Fig. 3)

A squeeze of the left hand and it is opened to disclose the spool. This is placed on the table.

ANOTHER THIMBLE

The right index finger produces another thimble (really the same one) by quickly bending back, slipping its tip into the thimble held between thumb and second finger and straightening out.

To be effective this action must be rapid-fire. A great deal of practice is necessary to achieve this.

VANISHES

Now follows several disappearances and reappearances of the thimble based on this move.

The performer puts his thimble-capped right index finger on his open left hand near the base of the second and third fingers.

He closes his left fingers around the thimble and withdraws his index finger. Or so it seems. What really happens is this. When the left fingers start to close, the right index finger bends quickly back, puts the thimble in the thumb palm position, then extends again.

The illusion is that the left hand removes the thimble and holds it in its closed fist. Hocus-pocus the first is opened. The thimble has vanished.

FOUR THIMBLE PRODUCTION

When the performer wants the thimble to reappear, he bends his right index finger and gets it back on its tip. This vanish and production is repeated. Finally instead of producing one thimble the wizard conjures up four.

The other three are those which have been on the curled fingers of his right hand, unbeknownst to the audience, since the trick began. All the fingers are extended at once and thus four thimbles are produced.

FOUR THIMBLE VANISH

The vanish of the four thimbles is one of the finest moves in thimble magic.

The right hand, fingers extended, approaches the left fist and tucks each of the four thimbles inside. First that on the little finger, then those on the third, second and first fingers. Each time the thimble is tucked in, the finger it is on is pulled out quickly and bent down. The thimble never leaves the tip, but the illusion is that it does.

When the index finger's thimble is pulled back, this is thumb-palmed.

The wizard has a thimble on each of his closed right fingers except the index finger, and these fingers are closed hiding the thimbles from view. The index finger points at the left hand which is supposed to contain the thimbles.

The left hand opens. The thimbles have melted away. Let me repeat that this is one of the finest moves in the whole range of thimble magic and well worth the time it takes to get it letter perfect.

REPRODUCTION

To reproduce the thimbles, the magician bends his right index finger back to the thumb-palmed thimble. He gets it on, then extends it. At that exact instant he opens all his right fingers. The illusion is that the thimbles have reappeared instantaneously.

THE FINAL VANISH

Now for the final move of the routine.

Once more the thimble-capped fingers of the performer's right hand approaches his left hand. Starting with his little finger, each finger again tucks its thimble into his fist. This time he actually leaves them there.

The index finger pushes its thimble in and jams the three there already on its tip, nesting the group firmly together. It bends the stack of thimbles around the thumb as described earlier with a single thimble. (Fig. 3)

The right thumb and second finger close on the stack and take it away.

With his left hand still closed—apparently holding the four thimbles—his right hand, with its secret load, picks up the spool and waves it over the left fist. Hocus-pocus, the left fingers open. The hand is empty.

The performer's right hand drops the spool (and the hidden thimbles) in his right side coat pocket and he is ready to go ahead with another trick.

I prefer a thimble color combination of two reds, one green and a yellow. Generally I use a spool of red cotton.

This thimble routine is always ready. No thimble holders or specially made devices are necessary. One trick follows another in logical sequence and the climax leaves you with empty hands.

It must be practiced many, many times before you show it once. Practice before a mirror until you are sure all moves are properly covered.

CHAPTER TWO

Money Magic

Conjuring with coins and paper money appeals to most magicians—and more important—to most audiences.

When T. Nelson Downs, unsurpassed coin manipulator, produced freshly minted half dollars from nowhere every man Jack among his onlookers wished he could do the same himself. Not imitate the dexterous Downs' sleight of hand necessarily but pull money from thin air with no apparent effort.

Manuel, who billed himself "Master of the Mighty Dollar", sometimes produced mirrors, which reflected the theater's spotlights at his fingertips, or, more amazing, live gold fish. Spectacular as the latter trick was, it still didn't have the basic appeal of his money production.

It is interesting, and not illogical, that spectators prefer their wizards to conjure up cash rather than make it disappear. If the magic man does make a borrowed bill or coin vanish the audience will laugh at the discomfort of the lendee, but share his happiness when the performer returns the money at the trick's conclusion.

Close-up tricks with money are excellent because everyone is familiar with the objects used. The more commonplace the wizard's props, the more astonishing his tricks. Trickery is expected with red and green Chinese boxes or

chromeplated metal tubes. A handful of change or a dollar bill, on the other hand, is so familiar that the possibility of hocus-pocus seems far remote.

TWO BILL TRICK

The surprise endings of O. Henry's short stories brought him a wide audience. Even today stories with "trick" endings appeal to a greater number of readers than any other type.

Here is a feat of intimate conjuring with an O. Henry flavor. The surprise at the finish will delight magicians who are familiar with the basic patterns of magic as well as lay spectators.

The magician borrows two one dollar bills. He crumples each into a ball. One he puts in his left hand, the other he drops in his pocket.

Hocus-pocus. Both bills appear in his left hand. Then despite generations of advice to the contrary he repeats the trick . . . successfully.

He attempts it a third time. One in the hand, one in the pocket. Hocus pocus.

Two in the left hand? No. Just one. Has the trick failed? Not quite. The wizard unrolls the crumpled bill. It is a two dollar note!

Method—A dollar bill is folded in half. A two dollar bill is crumpled and placed on the dollar. The dollar is bunched up around the two spot carefully so that later the two bills may be divided quickly.

After this preparation the magician is ready to perform. He holds the two-in-one packet in his right hand, concealed from view by his closed last three fingers.

The performer borrows two one dollar bills. He crumples one in each hand and drops them to the table in front of him.

"Two dollars".

The performer picks up the crumpled bill to his right between the thumb and index fingers of his right hand (the other closed fingers hide the two-in-one packet).

As he brings his right hand to his left, he pushes the borrowed bill back with his thumb until it rests against the two-in-one packet. The two are pressed together and dropped as one into the left hand, which closes immediately.

"One in my hand", says the wizard.

He picks up the remaining bill and drops it in his pocket.

"One in my pocket".

"Hocus pocus". The performer opens his left hand. Two crumpled bills roll out. "Two in my hand".

The wizard picks up the two-in-one packet and puts it back in his left hand.

"They say a magician should never repeat his tricks but I'll try it again. One in my hand". He closes his left hand.

"One in my pocket". He puts the remaining bill in his pocket as before.

"Hocus pocus". Secretly with his left thumb the wizard separates the two-in-one packet in his left hand. He gives the outer bill a little squeeze so that it will not be noticeably larger than the inner bill. Then he opens his hand allowing the two to drop to the table.

"Success", he enthuses, "I'll try it again. One in my hand". The crumpled two spot which looks exactly like a one to the spectators is put in the left hand.

"Hocus pocus". The performer triumphantly opens his left hand. *One* bill rolls out. He looks crestfallen, smiles a bit sadly and opens out the crumpled note.

His smile grows in intensity as the bill unfolds. "*Two* in my hand". It is the two dollar bill.

THE MIDAS TOUCH

I recommend this as a before dinner trick rather than an after dinner trick. Or if service is slow you might do it following the soup course to fill in the wait for the entree.

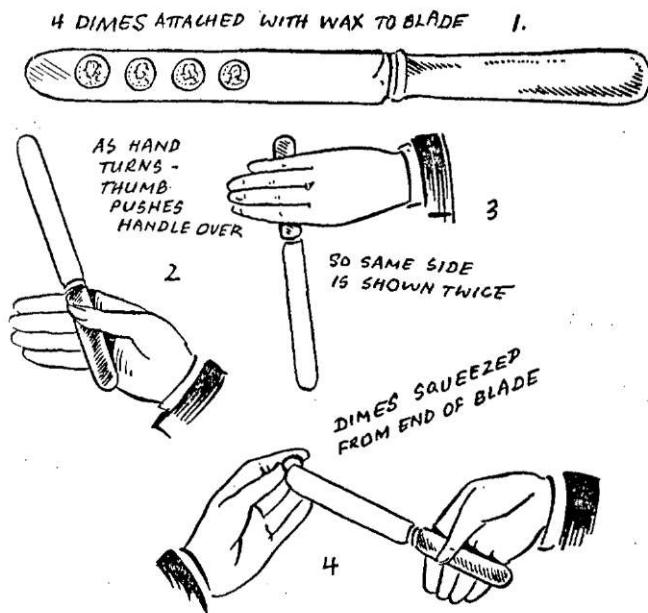
The wizard picks up his table knife, shows both sides, then points with it to his left hand. This, too, he displays back and front.

He presses the knife between his left finger and thumb and produces a dime from the end of the blade. This is put in his left coat pocket.

Again he shows knife and hand. He repeats the trick and conjures up another ten cent piece.

Faunting the "never repeat a trick" rule, he does it—not twice—but four times.

Method—Four dimes are stuck to the under side of a table knife with adhesive wax. This is done, of course, before dinner is served if you're at home,



or while your dinner companion's attention is elsewhere if you're dining out.

The knife is shown back and front by an ingenious move. Hold the knife in your right hand, fingers on left side, thumb on right. As you turn your

hand to show the under side of the blade, push the knife handle over with your thumb. Thus top side is shown twice. The move is convincing if properly executed. When you turn your hand back, press with your fingers to turn the handle again so that the blade which has been shown is back on the top again.

Put your left fingers under the blade, pull the first dime free from its wax and slide it off and away at the end. Drop this coin in your pocket.

Show the knife back and front again and produce the second coin. Repeat with the remaining two.

The production of four coins makes the trick several times more effective than if a single dime were produced.

The first time the spectator thinks he has been caught off guard. The second time, he still thinks he can catch the secret. By the fourth time he usually gives in and admits you have him baffled.

If you have four two dollar gold pieces and use them instead of dimes, audience interest in the trick will be increased.

A SECRET DEVICE

With the aid of this "secret device" even a beginner can present what seems to be expert sleight of hand.

For instance, he can make five pennies vanish one at a time in his left hand—with his sleeves rolled up—then reproduce them in just as mystifying a manner.

Or he can show a thimble and cause it to fade away, then come back.

Even as odd-shaped an object as a safety pin can be handled as described above.

Method—A magnet is the basis of the trickery. Not the usual type, but one which was developed for hairdressers. They use it to remove pins quickly from complicated hairdos. Though only the size of a shaving stick, it is extremely powerful.

You can obtain these magnets from your local hairdresser's supply house.

The magnet is placed in your right hip pocket before your exhibition.

The pennies used must be of the non-copper sort. Any object which the magnet will attract can be "manipulated" in the trick.

Stand with your left side toward your onlookers. Pick up a penny, display it at your finger tips. Drop your hand to your side, let the penny touch the slight bulge the magnet makes through your suit. The magnet will hold the coin through the cloth.

Immediately bring your hand back into view with its fingers closed. Show your palm, then turn your hand and show the reverse side. Open your fingers wide. The penny has apparently vanished. Repeat this maneuver with four other pennies. Then make them reappear by reversing the moves.

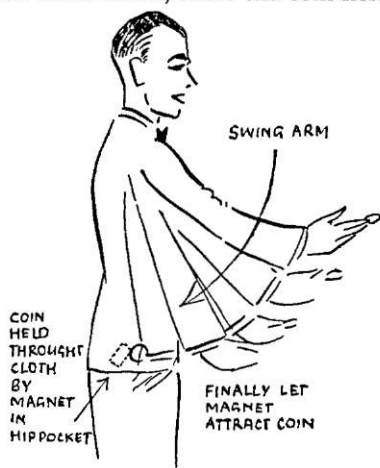
You must try to convince your audience that you are cleverly manipulating the coins. This will detract attention from the real secret of your sorcery.

With practice you will be able to bring your hand down, leave the coin held held by the magnet, then up again with a graceful unrevealing movement.

All through the routine you must keep your right side away from your onlooker's view for obvious reasons.

Before you try to make any metal object vanish in public, always test it privately. Sometimes one safety pin will work and another will not, though both have the same appearance. A difference in metallic content causes this variance.

I am indebted to Audley Dunham, of Indianapolis, for tipping me off to this strong, small magnet.



COIN IN MATCHBOX

A favorite trick of closeup conjurors is passing a borrowed coin into a matchbox previously shown empty. A duplicate coin is secreted between the upper rear edge of the open drawer and the top of the box, the drawer holding it in place.

The box is shown empty with the drawer open. When the drawer is closed, the coin drops inside and is ready for disclosure at any time you decide to show that a borrowed coin has penetrated the closed box.

While tinkering with a matchbox, which had a drawer made of pasteboard, I discovered an interesting variation on this feat with which you might like to experiment. As in the older trick a coin, a quarter shall we say, is wedged between the drawer and the top.

Show the box apparently empty, then close it, but not completely.

If it is open just a fraction of an inch, that is enough to hold the coin in place. Put the box on the table before you.

Borrow a quarter. Drop it on the table so that it rings. You want to emphasize the sound subtly.

Pick up the matchbox, shake it—not too vigorously. No sound results for, as you remember, the coin still is wedged in tightly.

Replace the matchbox on the table and as you do so push the drawer in the tiny extra bit which will release the coin.

Since the drawer is made of cardboard, there is no revealing sound.

The borrowed quarter can be made to disappear by the easiest of sleights.

Call attention to the coin on your outstretched right palm. Bring your right hand toward your left and apparently “pour” the coin into your left hand. Your left hand closes immediately and your right hand drops naturally to your side. The coin never leaves your right hand; as your hand tilts, its back hides the coin from view and your spectators believe that it slides off into the waiting hand below. Actually you retain it in your right hand and misdirect the audience's attention to your closed left hand.

Make a gesture with your left hand toward the box. Show your hand empty. Pick up the box.

Shake it before you open it. The noise of the coin will be heard inside. Push open the tray and let the quarter fall out.

This is the climax. If you are a stickler for detail, pick up the coin with your right hand and in passing it back to the spectator, exchange it for the borrowed one.

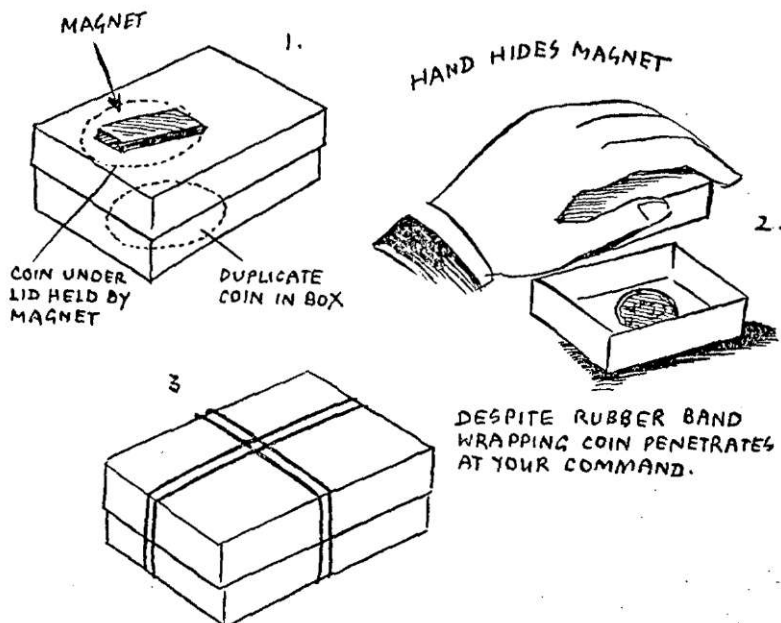
The simplicity of the moves, the neat sound angle, and the fact that the trick can be done almost anywhere under most conditions makes this a perfect feat for the closeup performer.

PENNY PENETRATION

Though the effect of this mystery is the same as the one just described, the method is entirely different. The more methods a magician has at his finger tips, the better equipped he is to baffle his audiences.

In this version, you lift the cover from a small cardboard box and tip out the penny which it holds. Then you replace the cover, wind rubber bands around the box and put it on the table.

Hocus pocus, the penny vanishes. A spectator removes the elastics and opens the box. Inside is the vanished coin. Box, coin and rubber bands may all be examined thoroughly should anyone be interested.



Method—The main piece of trickery here is the employment of either wartime American pennies or Canadian nickels. Both are attracted by magnets.

The secret prop is an Alnico magnet. Before performing the trick turn the lid of the box upside down. Place a wartime penny near one corner. Beneath this, outside the lid, place the magnet.

Put the second penny on the inside of the box and replace the lid. A strong magnet in your hip pocket (described in this book) completes the preparation.

When you take up the box to show the feat, your hand covers the corner of the lid where the magnet is placed, thus hiding it from view. Lift the lid with your left hand and with your right hand turn the box and let the second penny fall out. Replace the lid. As the two halves of the paper box go together turn the box over, top to bottom. Slide the magnet off secretly with your left hand. Reach with this hand in your left pocket for the rubber bands. Leave the magnet behind when you bring out the elastics. Wrap the bands around the box securely.

Pick up the second penny. Wave it with your right hand. It vanishes as described elsewhere under the title—*"The Secret Device"*.

When an onlooker opens the paper box, the coin is found, despite the rubber band wrapping which protected the box, back in place.

FIRE MONEY

The charm of this little trick is that by doing it you can instantly establish yourself in the onlooker's eyes not only as a magician—but as one who puts his talents to practical uses.

The conjurer strikes a paper match and by the simple tactic of reaching in its flame produces a shining new half dollar.

Method—Carry a paper match folder in your side pocket. This has a new fifty cent piece in between the back cover and the matches.

Take out the folder with your right hand. Open its flap with your left hand. Tilt the folder and the coin will roll out into your right hand which is closed concealing the half dollar from view.

Tear out a match with your left hand and strike it on the folder. Let the folder drop from your right hand to the table.

Stare at the flame a few seconds to center attention there, then reach in to it quickly with your right hand. Let the coin drop to your finger tips. The illusion is that you've produced it between your thumb and first finger from the center of the flame.

The newer the coin you use, the more it reflects light when you produce it. And the more it reflects light the better the effect on your audience.

MELTING MONEY

Show a half dollar. Apparently put it in your left hand but really retain it in your right.

Reach for your cigarette lighter with your right hand. Leave the coin it conceals in your pocket as you bring out the lighter.

Light the lighter and pass the flame under your closed left hand.

"Silver melts if enough heat is applied," you say. Let the lighter snap shut.

"Perhaps I heated it a little too much."

Show your left hand empty.

"It not only melted—but also disappeared."

The use of the lighter and the addition of a little patter changes a simple sleight into an effective close-up trick.

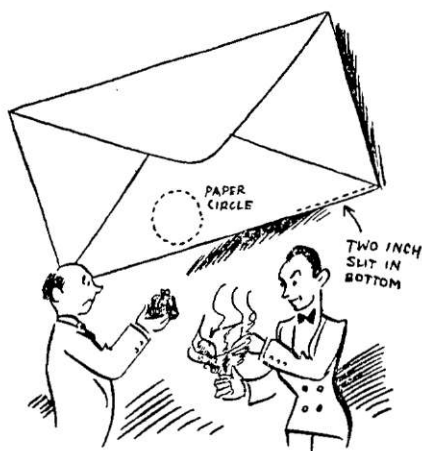
BURNING A HALF DOLLAR

A borrowed half dollar is sealed in an envelope. A coin purse is given to the spectator by way of security. The envelope is lighted. As it blazes away the shadow of the coin is visible, yet no trace of the silver piece can be found in the ashes.

The spectator is told to unsnap the clasp of the coin purse he holds. Inside, to his visible delight, is his half dollar.

Method—Cut a half dollar size circle from a letterhead and paste it inside the envelope you plan to use. It should be about center with the lower edge resting on the bottom. A slit two inches is cut in the lower right hand corner of the envelope with a sharp razor blade. (See illustration.)

In your right trouser pocket have a coin purse, open end up with the clasp unfastened. A wooden match, lengthwise across inside the purse, holds it open in readiness for use.



Borrow a fifty cent piece which you allow the spectator to mark with a sharp knife or heavy pencil. A knife preferably because pencil marks frequently wipe off during the trick. Perhaps you might prefer to furnish a small sticker which the spectator can paste to the coin bearing his signature.

Open the flap of the envelope and drop the coin inside. Seal the flap, tilting the envelope to the right as you do, so that the coin falls through the slit and into your right hand.

Pass the envelope to your left hand then reach for your cigarette lighter in your right trouser pocket with your right hand. As soon as your hand is out of sight slip the coin in the purse, snap the clasp shut and bring out the cigarette lighter.

Before you set the envelope afire say, "If anything should happen to your coin, I want you to have this as a memento."

Put the lighter on the table, pull the closed purse from your pocket and toss it to the cooperating spectator.

Pick up the lighter, ignite it and bring it close to the envelope. As you approach the envelope, call attention to the coin (the shadow) inside.

Set the envelope afire, touching the flame to the slit edge first to be sure any tell-tale evidence will be destroyed.

Pass the envelope from hand to hand as it burns, then throw it into the air or drop it on a tray for the last stages of destruction. This depends upon your style of sorcery and where you are performing the feat.

Just when the spectator has given up hope of ever seeing his coin again, tell him to open the purse. The original marked coin is inside.

HAND TO HAND

The best tricks I have always contended are those performed closeup with borrowed articles. This coin routine is near the top of the list of my favorites.

The wizard borrows two quarters and two nickels. He holds the quarters in his left hand, the nickels in his right. Hocus pocus. He now has a quarter and a nickel in each hand. Hocus pocus again, and the nickels are where the quarters were and the quarters are in the hand which originally held the nickels.

Method—An extra nickel makes the trick possible. You hold this in your right hand secretly by bending your last three fingers around it.

Pick up a quarter with your right hand. Drop it in your left hand. Close your left hand.

Pick up the second quarter. Retain it secretly at your right finger tips and throw the hidden nickel in the left hand with the quarter. Close your left hand immediately.

Pick up the two nickels in your right hand. Say "hocus pocus".

Throw a nickel and a quarter from your right hand to the table, retaining a nickel in the curl of your fingers.

Drop the quarter and the nickel from your left hand.

Open your left hand, palm upward. Pick up the nickel from the left group with your right hand. Drop it in your left hand. Close your left hand.

Pick up the quarter with your right hand. Retain it and let the concealed nickel fall in your left hand, which closes immediately.

Pick up the remaining quarter and nickel with your right hand. Close your fingers. Abracadabra.

Toss two quarters out of your right hand, retaining the nickel. Let the two nickels fall from your left hand.

Pick up the four coins with your right hand and start to put them in your pocket. Drop the extra nickel inside, then say, "Oh, yes I borrowed these."

Withdraw your hand and return the coins to their respective owners. All through the trick the back of the right hand is toward the front.

NICKELS AND QUARTERS

Few table tricks are as cleancut and as easy to do as this closeup coin feat.

The magician puts two quarters under one envelope, two nickles under another. A spectator holds each tightly with his hand over the top.

"Pass", commands the wizard.

When the envelopes are lifted, quarters are where the nickels were and vice versa.

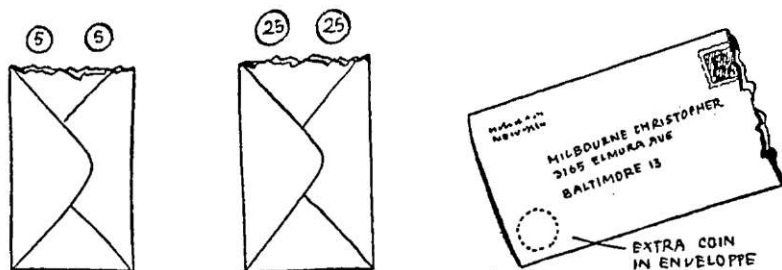
Method—Previous to performance you thumb palm a quarter. Both coins and envelopes may be borrowed.

Put the two nickels to your left on the table, the two quarters to your right. Put an envelope an inch away from each pair.

Lift the end of the envelope to your left with your left hand while you pick up a nickel with your right hand. Call attention to the fact that you are putting a nickel under the envelope.

As you put your hand under the cover of the envelope, let the palmed quarter drop and palm the nickel. Let the envelope fall over the coin.

Lift the rear end of the right hand envelope with your left hand. Take a quarter in your right hand and apparently place it under this envelope. Repeat the move used before. Let the concealed nickel drop and palm the quarter.



This switch of coin is easy and natural. It is covered by the envelope and your closed hands mask the extra coin.

A second nickel is apparently put with the first under the left envelope and a second quarter seemingly joins the first quarter under the right envelope.

The spectators hear these coins fall and clink against those already under the envelopes as you put them in place. Though the trick is now over as far as your sleight of hand is concerned, it hasn't started from the spectator's viewpoint.

Announce what will take place. Have a spectator press tightly against each covering envelope, yet when they are released the quarters and nickels have mysteriously changed places.

Get rid of the extra coin casually while the spectators hold the envelopes by putting your hand in your side pocket.

If you prefer to use your own coins and envelopes for this feat, you may use one of the envelopes to advantage.

Have two envelopes, covers from old letters addressed to you, in your inside coat pocket. In one drop the extra quarter. When you are ready to perform this trick, take out the envelopes and let the coin concealed inside slide out unnoticed into your hand.

This method for secretly obtaining possession of a coin is useful in many other feats.

GRANDMA'S COIN TRICK

"You may not know it," the performer chuckles, "but my grandmother was a magician."

He proceeds to show Grandma's pet trick. A borrowed coin is marked and wrapped in a handkerchief held by a spectator.

The wizard removes a ball of wool from "Grandma's sewing bag." He puts it in a clear glass tumbler and gives the free end of the wool to another spectator. The coin vanishes at his command from under the handkerchief.

The other spectator pulls on the wool until the ball is completely unraveled. In its center is the marked borrowed coin.

Method—The vanish of the coin is effected by means of a prepared handkerchief. This has a half dollar sewn in one of its corners. When the wizard

wraps the borrowed coin, he gets this sewn in coin under the center of the handkerchief and it is this that the spectator holds.

He feels a coin through the cloth and naturally supposes it is the borrowed coin.

When the wizard brings his hand out from under the folds after wrapping the coin, he has the marked coin in it.

He picks up the sewing bag, opens it, and takes out the ball of wool.

Here I must give credit to the ingenuity of my old friend, Hen Fetsch, of Baltimore.

Fastened to the inside of the bag is a metal slide just large enough to admit the coin. The ball of wool is wrapped around the bottom of this slide; the top is open. This enables a coin inserted in the top to slide to the center of the ball of wool.

When the performer opens the bag, he fits his concealed coin in the top of the slot, lets it slip down inside the ball, then pulls the ball off the end and brings it out.

Mr. Fetsch's method of loading the ball of wool makes the trick practical even though the wizard performs while surrounded by an audience.

How logical to take a ball of wool from a sewing bag, and how easy to load the coin in the process. The ball of wool is dropped in the glass, the second spectator holds its end.

The wizard takes a free corner of the handkerchief the first spectator is holding and yanks it out of his grasp.

The coin apparently has vanished. Spectator number two unravels the ball until only the marked coin is left in the glass. Still in the glass it is passed to the owner and the mark is confirmed.

DOLLAR AND STRING

Some feats of magic seem impenetrable to the uninformed. This closeup masterpiece is one of them.

The wizard folds a dollar bill in half and makes a hole through it by pushing the point of a pencil through its center.

He threads the folded bill on a string using the pencil to force the string through the two tiny holes in the dollar.

A spectator holds an end of the string in each hand and the wizard covers the dollar with his pocket handkerchief. In short order he pulls away the covering cloth and mysteriously removes the dollar from the center of the string.

Method—The performer needs two dollars which are similar in appearance. He folds one and pushes a pencil through its middle. After removing the pencil, he folds the dollar into a small package and tucks it under his wrist watch band on the band side. He is now prepared to perform the trick.

The wizard shows the matching bill, penetrates it with the pencil, then threads it on a piece of string.

"Hold the ends securely", he warns, as he covers the bill with his pocket handkerchief.

With both hands under the cloth he first reaches with his right fingers and gets the duplicate bill from under his watch band. He quickly unfolds it.

Then holding the duplicate in his right hand, he tears the bill on the

string from one of its sides to the center hole. He does this carefully so that neither the sound nor action of what he is doing is obvious.

The torn bill is crumpled and dropped down his left sleeve. He folds the duplicate dollar over the string, then pulls away the covering cloth. A second later he lifts the bill off the string.

The ends of the string are still held by the spectator and the bill is in the same condition it was when threaded. Little wonder onlookers are baffled.

A small point, but one worth noting, is that the dollar is not taken from under the cloth, but the cloth is lifted and then the dollar is removed from the string.

Afterwards with this presentation many untrained observers will say that you pulled the dollar through the string visibly.

If the performer uses an average dollar bill, one neither too new nor too old, for his duplicate, he may borrow the dollar to thread on the string.

CHAPTER THREE

Rope Wizardry

Some magicians are partial to tricks with cards and coins, others delight in ingenious mechanisms or clever illusions. I prefer magic with rope.

Easy to carry, ropes are available almost everywhere. They are effective to work with in small rooms and visible even from the galleries of large theaters. This I know because I have performed my routine in such spacious houses as the Scala in Berlin, the Empire in Glasgow and the Fox in Detroit.

They are visible, that is, if the performer wears a contrasting color. Once the manager of the Capitol Theater in Washington insisted that I wear a white dinner jacket instead of my customary black to fit in with his summer stage setting. It was obvious in the opening show that my white ropes against a white coat couldn't be seen past the first row. He was happy to have me change back.

Years ago I experimented with colored ropes. I thought they would add to my act's eye appeal and be a novelty. I soon discovered that audiences were suspicious of tinted hems, that tricks were better received when performed with the standard garden variety of clothesline.

THE FADEAWAY KNOT

Here is an excellent addition to your stock of impromptus. You can do it but the spectator can't.

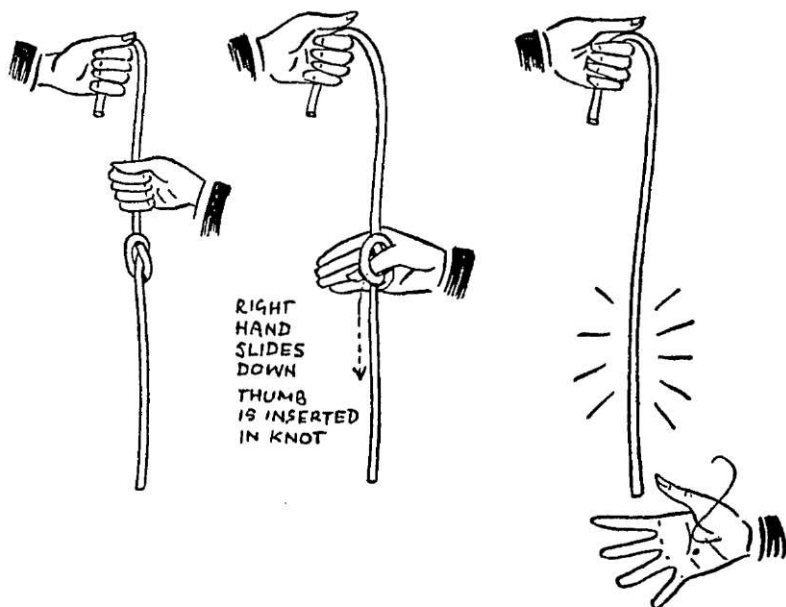
The magician ties an overhand knot in a short piece of rope. He closes his hand around the knot and says "Do you know it's possible to slide a knot off a rope"?

As the curious watch, the performer slides his hand down the rope. The knot disappears.

When a spectator tries to duplicate the trick he finds that the knot will move down an inch or so then tighten and go no further.

Method—Though any length may be used I prefer a rope about sixteen inches long. Tie an overhand knot about eight inches from the upper end. Don't draw the knot tight. Keep it about an inch and a half across the opening.

Hold the rope in your left hand as shown in the drawing. Close your right hand around the rope about three inches above the knot.



From the front it appears that you simply run your closed hand down the rope and slide the knot it covers to the end and off.

Actually as your right hand approaches the knot, secretly slip your thumb in the center and pull downwards. You will find that the knot travels along easily and unties at the bottom.

As soon as you have pulled the knot out, stroke the rope once or twice with your right hand and leave the impression that was how you slid the knot out.

You may prefer to fail in your first attempt to slide the knot off. If so don't insert your thumb in the knot. After a try or two, slip your thumb in and zip the knot away.

When you tie another knot for the spectator who wishes to try the feat, make it a bit smaller than the knot you use. This tends to throw suspicion away from the secret use of the thumb.

This feat ranks high as a close-up confuser.

SPECTACLES TO MONOCLE

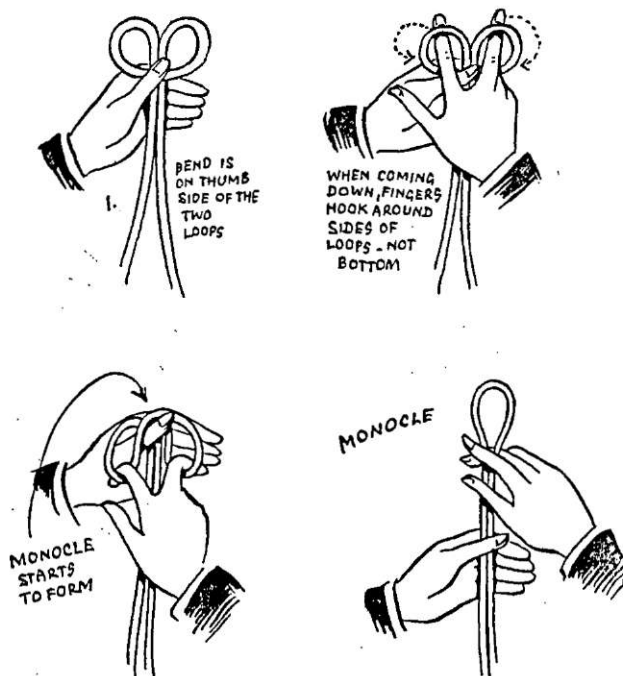
This is another of those wonderful little stunts that the magician can do but his audience can't. Even if repeated several times, it is still baffling to a close observer.

The performer holds the center of a piece of rope in his left hand, pulls it up and bends it back with his right hand so that it appears as shown in the illustration.

"Spectacles," he says, lifting the looped rope and peering through the two openings.

He lowers his left hand and inserts the index and middle fingers of his right hand in the openings. He makes a quick movement.

"Monocle!" A single loop is now held between his two right fingers. He



raises the "monocle" to his right eye and winks through it.

Method—Simple though this may read it's almost impossible for a spectator to discover the way the "spectacles" change to the "monocle". I have had onlookers try for hours with the rope in their hands without success.

Refer to the illustration. When you put your right fingers in the loops, quickly bend your fingers down and around the sides of the loops. Press the loop that is formed between them tightly. Release your left thumb which has been holding the "spectacles" and straighten your right fingers. The "monocle" appears between them.

This move must be made at lightning speed. It requires much practice for perfection. Once you have mastered it, you will have an audience-proof baffler at your finger tips.

This feat is an ancient, but little known, nautical problem. By calling the double loop a pair of spectacles and the single loop a monocle, I added a bit of window dressing which helps greatly in putting the stunt across.

NAUTICAL PUZZLE

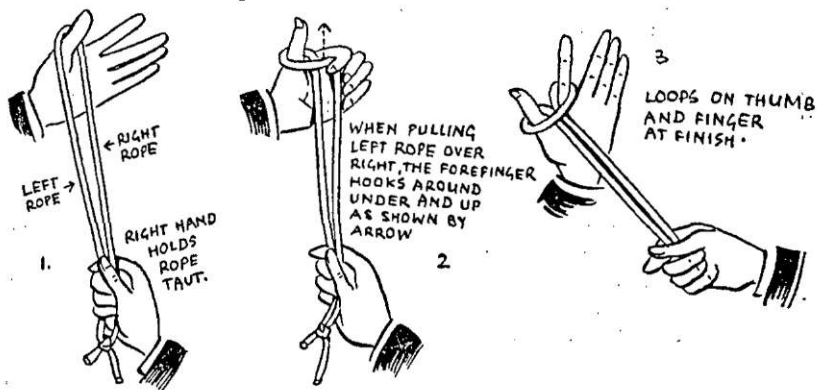
Here is another first-rate spectator teaser. Few, very few, people will be able to discover the method even if the feat is repeated. Like "Spectacles to Monocle" it is a wonderful close-up mystery.

The performer puts a loop of rope over his left thumb. He makes a rapid move and it is now seen that both thumb and first finger are encircled.

The confident onlooker who thinks he can duplicate the trick will entertain you with his struggles.

Method—Put the loop over your left thumb, then pull the rope taut with your right hand. Bend your left forefinger over the right rope and across and around the left rope. Pull the left rope over the right with the bent left forefinger, then hook your forefinger under, around and up as shown in the drawing.

This is a strange move. Study the illustration carefully. At first you will find it awkward to bend your finger properly. You must practice until you can do it easily and rapidly if you intend to show the feat successfully. I am indebted to my old friend Dean Longfellow for this secret. In his hands the stunt is a real puzzler.



CIGARETTE TO ROPE

What better way to begin a routine of rope tricks than with a surprise. No mention is made of rope. The performer seems to be doing an entirely different trick—when suddenly the rope is there.

The sleight of hand performer reaches out in thin air and produces a cigarette.

He takes out his lighter, flicks it. Sparks result, but no flame. He shrugs and slips the lighter back in his pocket.

He holds one tip of the cigarette in each hand and pulls. The cigarette stretches to king size, giant size and finally a length of three feet.

The wizard lets one end drop.

What seemed to be a very long cigarette now is a piece of rope.

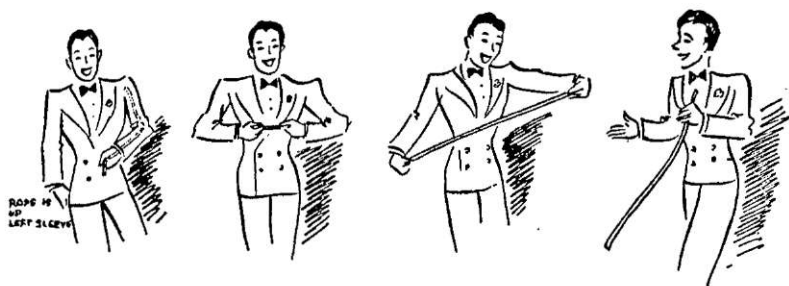
Method—Previous to his performance the magician removes his coat. He clips one end of a three foot piece of rope between the base of his left thumb and index finger. Pressure of the thumb holds it in place. He replaces his coat which brings the rope up his sleeve automatically.

When the performer walks out the rope end is held in his left hand in the position described, and the unlit cigarette is held in a similar position in his right hand. A cigarette lighter without fuel is in his right trouser pocket.

Care must be taken that both the palmed cigarette and rope end are hidden from audience view.

When he arrives at center stage, the wizard reaches out in space with his right hand. At the same time he bends his index and second finger back so that the palmed cigarette comes between them. Holding the cigarette by pressure between these fingers he straightens his fingers bringing the cigarette with them.

Smartly done, it looks as though a cigarette has suddenly appeared in smoking position in his hand.



Now comes the move upon which the feat is based. The performer apparently changes the cigarette from his right hand to his left.

Actually, as his right hand approaches his left, the right fingers bend back and place the cigarette once more in thumb palm position. This is done under cover of the left hand.

Synchronized with this movement the right fingers take the rope end which is palmed in the left hand and pull about two inches through the left, second and third fingers.

These fingers hold the rope in cigarette fashion. Because a cigarette has been shown originally, and because the rope is white, the same diameter and apparent length of the cigarette, there is no reason for the audience to suppose that a substitution has been made.

With attention focused on the "cigarette" the performer dips his right hand in his side pocket. He drops the concealed cigarette which it holds and immediately withdraws his hand, holding the cigarette lighter.

When the lighter doesn't work he replaces it and takes the extended end of the "cigarette" in his right hand.

He moves both hands apart at a similar pace. Slowly the cigarette grows. When the sleeved end of the rope reaches his left finger tips, he stops the stretching process and lets the end of the rope fall from his right hand.

With proper practice, care in execution and attention to small details, this cigarette to rope trick is a smash illusion.

The routine is easy to learn, but only with repetition can the magician perform the mystery gracefully and naturally.

It is important that the wizard feel the illusion that the cigarette is stretching and changing into a rope for an audience to fully appreciate his efforts. As the performer convinces himself that the trick is happening, his facial expressions mirror his thoughts and heighten the dramatic effect.

REMOVING A KNOTTED BRACELET

During the years I have devised no less than 23 methods for removing a tied bracelet from a piece of rope without cutting the rope or breaking the bracelet. Far and away the best is the routine which follows.

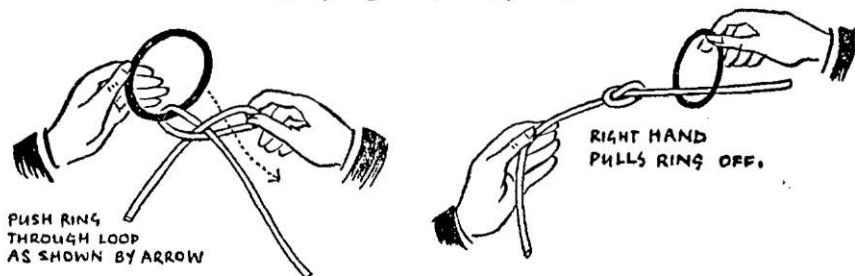
The magician threads a borrowed bracelet on a piece of rope and asks an obliging spectator to tie it in place with a single overhand knot.

He calls attention to the fact that he would have to be a wizard to remove the bracelet.

He holds the bracelet in his left hand, the rope's knot is his right, and pulls. The bracelet passes weirdly through the rope. The bracelet is free. The rope remains tied.

Method—Soft-braided rope is preferable for this trick. The bracelet should be made of solid bone or metal.

Slide the bracelet on the rope and have a spectator tie it near the center with an overhand knot. Or, if you prefer, tie it yourself.



Hold the bracelet by its rim in your left hand. Take the knot at the point shown in the illustration in your right hand. Pull until the knot is large enough so that you can, when you desire, force the bracelet through it.

The bracelet is pushed through casually as you point out how impossible it is to remove it without untying the knot. Once it is through, your left fingers hold it in place against the knot. From the front the bracelet seems firmly tied as ever.

Take the bracelet's rim securely in your right hand; hold the knot with your left hand. Pull left and away sharply. This movement jerks the rope out of the bracelet.

Performed with proper finesse, this trick gives the impression that the bracelet has penetrated the rope.

A second way to remove the bracelet at the finish is to hold the knot tightly in the left hand and pull the bracelet straight down about 15 inches, then off with the right hand.

Because the trick depends only on the move described it may be performed extemporaneously with borrowed bracelets and rope or with borrowed finger rings and strings.

THE KNOTTED RING

Should the audience show a proper reaction to this type of trickery, hold onto your props and do another one. This second version enables you to repeat gracefully without seeming repetitious or tipping alert onlookers to the secret.

An old conjuring rule states that a magician must not do the same trick twice before the same audience. It should be changed to read that he shouldn't do the same trick twice by the same method. If he uses a different method, repetition only serves to further mystify the audience.

The performer secures a ring to the center of a piece of rope with a number of knots. Each end of the rope is held by a spectator. The magician makes a quick movement. All the knots disappear. The ring slides back and forth freely.

Method—The knot is the thing in this trick. Magicians generally call this tie the *Chefalo Knot*. Actually the knot is far older than Chefalo, a contemporary European illusionist. A hundred years ago superstitious English farmers tied the knot and pulled it undone thinking that its magic powers could cure their sick cows. Even then the knot was old. Fortunately for magicians, the knot is little known outside conjuring circles despite its age.

The knot, which at first glance, looks complicated is readily mastered.



Tie a square knot above the ring as shown in the illustration. Take rope end "A" and put it through "B" from the rear. Pull it through the front and then put rope end "A" through loop "C" from the back. Take it out at the front. Tighten on the knot by pulling both ends.

Before you exhibit this trick you must practice until you can tie the knot by second nature. If you appear to be wondering just which end goes through which loop too much emphasis will be put on the knot and the trick will become more of a puzzle than a mystery.

Tie the knot quickly and tighten it by pulling both ends.

Give the ends of the rope to two spectators, then grasp the ring through the knot at the point where, if you look down from above, you will see a portion of the ring in the center of the knot. With your other hand open the knot wider as you talk so you can push the ring through it.

As you shove the ring through the loop the knot vanishes instantly, and the ring is left threaded on the rope.

Caution—Follow the illustration carefully. A square knot tied the reverse of the one I picture will not work with these instructions.

Some performers may prefer to cover the knotted ring with a handkerchief, then with actions concealed cause the knots to vanish.

RING AWAY

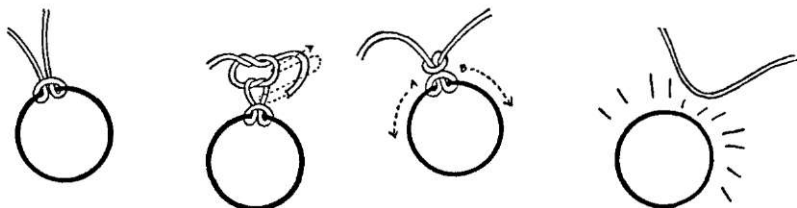
At first glance this may seem the same as "The Knotted Ring". I recommend a second glance. In this version the ring comes free of the rope at the finish.

I am a firm believer in the policy that the modern magician should have many methods to accomplish his various effects.

After a ring has been tied to a rope with several knots, the performer has a spectator hold the ends of the rope between his outstretched hands.

The tied ring is covered with a pocket handkerchief. The performer reaches beneath it and almost immediately frees the ring. When the handkerchief is lifted it is seen that the knots have vanished.

Method—Any ring and string or bracelet and soft rope may be used. The ring is threaded on the rope as shown in the first illustration.



In actual practice the rope is doubled. The bight end is passed through the ring and the ends are run through the bight.

A Chefalo knot is tied. Follow the second illustration. When this knot is tightened it appears as in the third illustration.

The ends of the rope are passed to a spectator. He is told to hold them firmly.

You can now remove the ring from the rope without covering it but I believe the covering adds to the trick's effectiveness.

To remove the ring simply pull the rope at points "A" and "B" around the ring as shown in illustration 3. This causes the looped rope to slide over the ring and away. If you instruct the spectator to pull the rope taut immediately after you have removed the ring the remaining knots will vanish.

All of this should be done before you bring the freed ring out from under the handkerchief.

On occasion I have performed this feat using a borrowed wrist watch and a rope. Even if the watch strap is of the leather "belt" type the trick is still worthwhile as it is obvious that you remove the watch without unfastening and fastening the strap. With practice you can effect the removal in a split second.

THE DOUBLE CUT

This is more than a cut and restored rope trick. A spectator attempts to duplicate the wizard's wonders and doesn't succeed.

The performer cuts a rope in half and ties the severed ends together. He knots, the free ends. He cuts the rope circle across the middle and gives an onlooker half; he takes half.

Each half has one of the knots in its middle. The magician restores his rope with ease; the spectator tries to follow his actions and ends up as he started with a knotted rope.

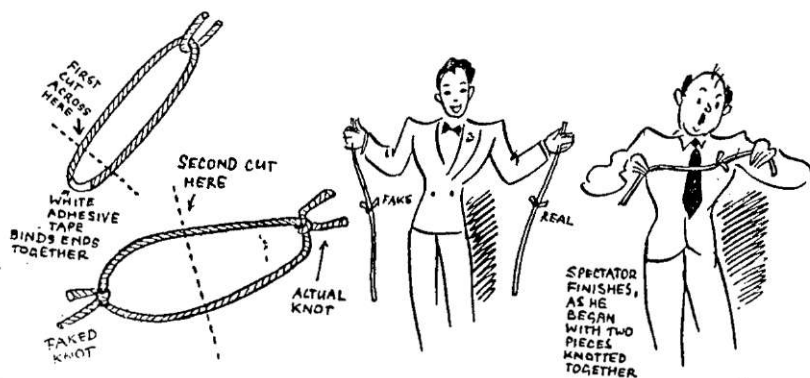
Both the rope the wizard restored and the knotted rope are given away for souvenirs.

Method—Before the performance a four inch piece of soft braided rope is formed into a circle. Its ends are put tip to tip and a half inch (wide)

strip of white adhesive tape is wound around them. This binds them tightly together and from a short distance the tape blends perfectly with the rest of the rope.

The prepared circle is threaded on a six foot length of matching rope.

If the circle is at the rope's center and if it is held protruding from the wizard's closed left hand with the joint hidden by his fingers and the long ends of the unprepared rope extending down from the bottom of his fist, it seems to be one rope held in cutting position.



The magician cuts the rope by snipping off the complete taped section. He does this by cutting through the rope just under the tape on each side as the loop protrudes above his left fist.

He ties the two visible ends together with two overhand knots. The whole rope now may be shown. It seems to be two pieces which have been tied together.

The wizard ties the far ends of the rope together so that a loop is formed.

He holds a knotted end in each hand and asks a spectator to cut through the center of both ropes. (See illustration.)

This done he gives the spectator the length which is legitimately two pieces tied together and keeps the rope with the false knot himself.

These sections, of course, are exactly alike in outward appearance.

"Wrap your rope around your left hand just as I am doing with mine", the wizard instructs his helper.

As the magician wraps his rope, he secretly slides off the fake knot, masking it until it slips off the end with his closed right hand.

"Reach in your pocket and take out some invisible powder", the performer continues. He puts his hand in his pocket, leaves the false knot behind and makes believe that he removes a pinch of invisible powder in his right fingers.

The spectator imitates his actions.

The wizard sprinkles the "powder" on his rope, then unwinds it from his hand to show that it is back in one piece.

The spectator unwinds his rope. It is still two pieces, knotted together.

"Oh well, better luck next time", the wizard smiles and he thanks the spectator and allows him to take his rope home as a souvenir.

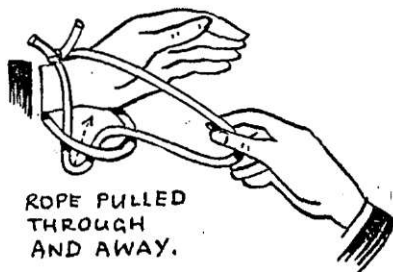
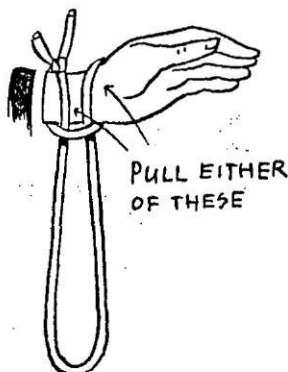
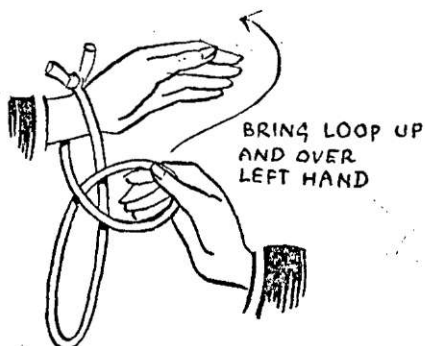
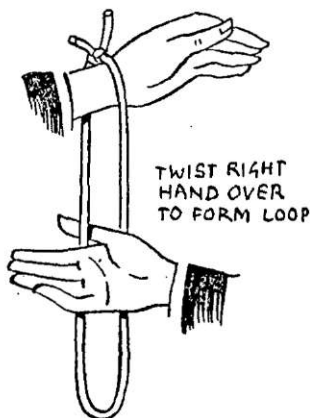
The performer tosses his rope to someone in the audience as a memento.

THE PULL-THROUGH

For many years this was a part of my rope routine. I found it equally effective in the parlor or on the stage.

The magician ties the ends of a five foot length of rope together to form a circle. He drops this over his left arm. As the rope hangs from his left wrist, he wraps it around his arm a second time, then gives it a yank with his right hand. The rope seems to penetrate his wrist and come away free.

Method—The best way to learn this feat is to follow the illustrations with a loop of rope in your hands.



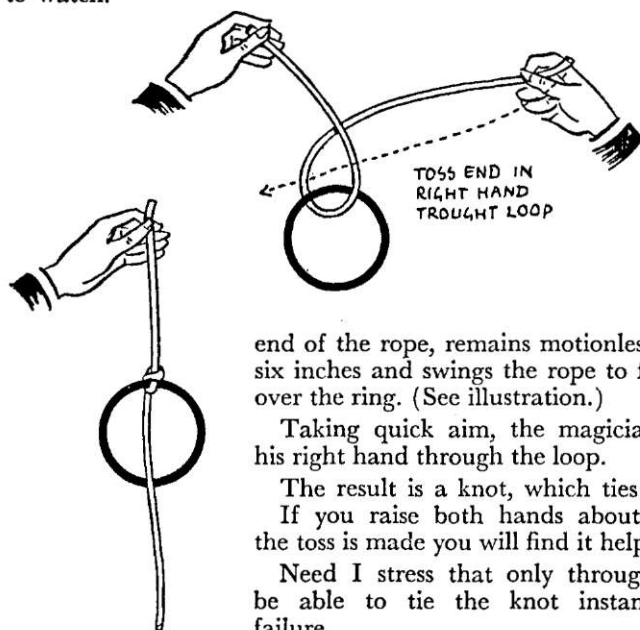
Put the loop over your left arm, grasp it a point "A", pull it toward your body about six inches, then twist your right hand and the rope to the left to form a loop. Put this loop over your left hand.

Take either of the ropes now lying across the top of your left wrist with your right hand and pull to the right and away. If neatly and rapidly done, a perfect illusion of the rope passing your wrist may be created.

It is wise at the start to drape the rope over your left wrist so that the knot is on top of your wrist. If this is not done the knot will occasionally catch in the loop and mar the smoothness of the effect.

TOSS-THROUGH KNOT

Still another feat with a ring and a rope. This one, however, is more in the nature of a flourish. It is executed in a split second and is very interesting to watch.



A ring is threaded on a rope. The performer holds an end of the rope in each hand. He makes a quick toss. The ring is tied to the center of the rope.

Method—While the magician's left hand, holding its end of the rope, remains motionless, his right hand rises six inches and swings the rope to form a loop, or bight, over the ring. (See illustration.)

Taking quick aim, the magician throws the end in his right hand through the loop.

The result is a knot, which ties the ring to the rope.

If you raise both hands about eight inches just as the toss is made you will find it helpful.

Need I stress that only through repetition will you be able to tie the knot instantly without fear of failure.

CHAPTER FOUR

Conjuring With Cards

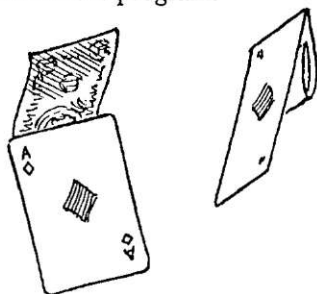
There are more tricks with playing cards than any other objects. Card games are popular pastimes and those who play them are especially delighted to watch tricks with the familiar pasteboards.

There are innumerable variations of the thousands of card tricks now in existence. I have seen a collection of 150 different devices all used for the same feat. As the audience sees it, selected cards rise from a pack. No matter which method is used, the trick to them is the same. Yet scarcely a year goes by but another half dozen methods are devised for this trick. The new methods allow the magician to operate with more freedom and under more difficult conditions than the old methods. Only the performer can appreciate the technological improvements.

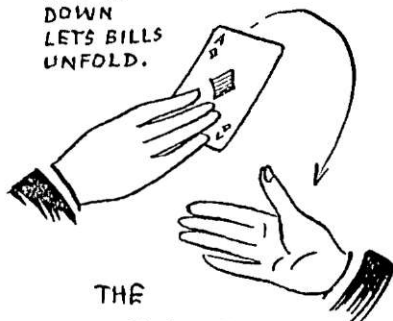
Some card tricks are best suited for intimate gatherings; others are designed for stage performance; still others are effective for both. The chapter that follows presents card magic of all types.

ACES TO DOLLARS

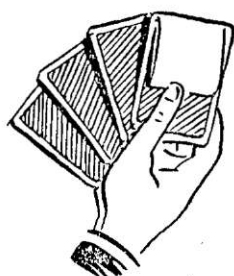
Quick tricks which are visual and surprising add immeasurably to the pace of a magic show. Spotted between longer, more complicated mysteries, they give a lift to the program.



RIGHT HAND
BRINGS CARDS
DOWN
LETS BILLS
UNFOLD.



THE
CHANGE



THUMB HOLDS
FOLDED BILLS
CLOSED.



FINALLY BILLS
MAY BE SHOWN
BACK AND
FRONT



Unfortunately feats of this nature are difficult to find. The trick which follows is my latest effort along these lines.

The magician takes several cards from his pocket.

"A friend asked me if an ace was important in a poker game".

The performer shows an ace.

"I told him the facts of life". The ace is returned to the other cards.

"Then my friend wanted to know about four aces".

The performer fans the cards and shows four aces.

"A handful of aces, I explained, is just as good as a handful of money".

Instantly the cards change to dollar bills, which the performer counts from one hand to the other.

Method—You need four aces from a poker pack and four dollar bills. Trim enough away from the long sides of the dollars so that they are slightly less wide than the width of a playing card. A dollar bill is glued to the back of an ace as shown in the illustration.

The other three dollars are lined up evenly on the glued bill and folded as shown in the drawing.

Two aces are placed under the prepared card and one ace is put on top of it. If the four are held tightly together you can show the cards back and front without arousing suspicion.

With the cards prepared as described you are ready to perform the trick. Hold the cards in your left hand. Show the single ace at the proper point in your patter. Put it back with the other two unprepared cards.

You may now show the four aces in your right hand as shown in the illustration. Take care that the folded bills don't protrude, even slightly.

Close the fan with your left hand. Move your right hand from the corner to the bottom center of the cards. Hold the cards tightly together as in illustration.

When you say "Handful of money" with a snap of your right hand let the concealed bills unfold as you bring your hand down toward your waiting left palm (study illustration 6).

The cards change instantly to dollar bills.

You may count the bills from one hand to the other as shown in the last three drawings.

THE TAP FORCE

It is frequently necessary in card magic for the performer to be sure that the spectator will take a certain card when offered what seems to be a free choice.

The following method is direct and convincing.

A spectator is told to extend his right index finger and tap the pack which the wizard spreads face down between his hands. He taps the one card the magician has selected for him.

Method—Put the card you want the spectator to take on the bottom of the pack. Shuffle it, retaining his card on the bottom. Cut the deck, then complete the cut, but not all the way.

Allow an eighth of an inch to remain between the two sections. The replaced section is then an eighth of an inch to the right of the other part. When you spread the cards between your hands you can locate the card you want taken by this gap. Move the cards so that the card you will force is exposed more than any of the others.

Tell the spectator to tap the deck. When his hand comes down, make sure

it touches the exposed card. It may be necessary to move the pack a little to the left or right as his finger approaches it, but this is not done obviously, nor will he notice it.

Remember you told him to "tap", not select, choose or take. Therefore he is not as careful as he would have been had you used one of these other words. Have him remove the "tapped" card, remember it, then put it back and you have succeeded in your mission.

The following trick makes use of this method of forcing.

CARD IN THE BAG

Tricks in which the wizard fails at first then finally succeeds are sure-fire. When he seems to miss the audience is sympathetic, the spectators imagine themselves in his embarrassing predicament. When he finishes triumphantly, they share his happiness.

This feat is in that category.

A card is selected, remembered and replaced in the pack. The pack is shuffled, then dropped in a paper bag. The magician announces he will find the card with his sensitive finger tips.

He reaches in, withdraws a card and holds it up in full view.

"Wrong," the spectator tells him.

The magician tries again. His second choice is another miss.

"Oh, well," he smiles weakly. "I've fifty more chances."

This time he asks the spectator to name his card. When the spectator does, the magician pulls his card out immediately—and it's several times the size of a normal card.

Method—A giant playing card is slipped into a flat paper bag before the performance. Nothing in the appearance of the bag indicates its contents.

By means of the Tap Force, described earlier, the magician is sure that the card the spectator takes will match the giant replica in the paper bag.

The wizard opens the bag and drops the pack inside. He takes any two cards from the bag during his first attempts. Then for the climax, after the spectator names his card, he removes the giant card.

The performer has the spectator name his card just before he produces it. Thus the entire audience will be convinced of the magician's success when he takes out the giant replica.

If only one person knew the wizard was successful, the climax of the trick would be delayed until the volunteer assistant confirms the choice.

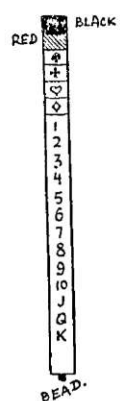
With everyone's knowing the card's identity the production of the giant card gets an immediate hearty response.

Suppose, you say, the wizard withdraws the correct card by accident during his first two attempts. That he obviously must avoid. When the chosen card is replaced, the magician notes into which part of the pack it is replaced. He estimates its position during the shuffle and takes cards from another section for his first two draws.

THE CARDOMETER

Novelty in presentation is always welcome in card magic. Here, with a simple gadget, the magician adds a touch of comedy to enliven a routine trick.

The wizard tells the spectator to think of the card he has selected. He removes a thermometer-like indicator from his pocket, holds it in his right



hand and grabs the spectator's wrist with his left hand.

"Concentrate on the color", he says.

Within a few seconds the indicator rises to red.

"Now think of the suit".

The indicator rises again. This time to the diamond mark.

"Lastly the number".

The indicator spurts to the six section.

Method—A ten inch long, half inch round wooden dowel is painted as shown in the drawing. A hole is bored in its center and a length of strong elastic is fastened to the top and threaded through to the bottom. There it is fastened to a bead.

The performer forces a card, by one of the methods already described in this chapter.

In removing the Cardometer from his pocket the magician clips the bead between his first and second fingers and pulls the elastic up along the rear side of the indicator.

When he relaxes his grip, the indicator will be forced up in his hand by the elastic.

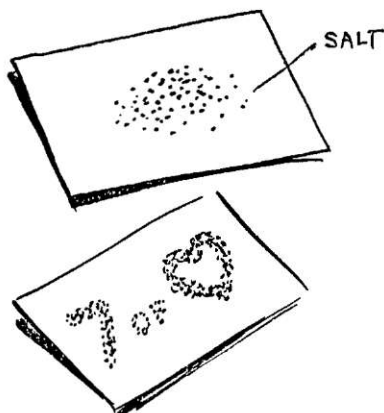
He causes it to stop at the desired points by tightening his hold as it reaches them.

The indicator on the Cardometer hides the elastic from view when held properly.

The Cardometer should be painted in bright colors.

SALTY SURPRISE

During a dinner with one of your friends, dip the untipped end of a paper match into a glass of water and quickly write "7 of H" on the back of a menu card or envelope.



Announce a card trick. Force the seven of hearts. Pick up the salt shaker and heap salt on the surface where previously you wrote with water.

Tell your friend to wave his card over the salt.

Tilt the menu or envelope. All the salt will slide off except that which covers your writing. There in solid salt lines will be the name of the selected card.

Paper matches are best because they are absorbent and "paint" words with wide lines.

If you can do your water-writing secretly while your table companion's attention is elsewhere the effect is doubled.

UNEASY ACES

There are several good points about this trick. It happens in the spectator's hands. It is a change from feats in which chosen cards are discovered. And it involves only four cards.

"Four aces", begins the wizard. He holds them face up in his left hand. He points with his right hand. "One red, one black, one red, one black".

The performer squares the four cards and turns them face down. They are held in his left hand in dealing position. He mixes the packet by passing cards one at a time from top to bottom.

"Do you think the top card is red or black?"

Whether or not the spectator guesses correctly is incidental. Suppose, for example, that the top card is the ace of hearts.

"A red card," says the performer. "I'll put it face down on the table." He does so.

"The black ace. I'll put on the bottom of the packet. And the other red ace", he turns up the ace of diamonds, "I'll put with the first one."

He directs a person to his right to cover the red aces with his hand on the table.

He puts the two remaining cards—the black aces—to his left on the table and has another spectator cover them.

"Watch closely", continues the performer. He makes a passing gesture between the two heaps.

When the spectators lift their hands and turn over the cards—red aces and black aces have mysteriously changed places.

Method—Hold the four aces arranged alternately, black and red, face down in your left hand. Your thumb is on the left edge of the packet, your fingers on the right edge. Bring your right hand over. Put your fingers on the upper edge of the cards, thumb on the lower edge.

Lift two cards with your right thumb secretly. Let your left little finger get between them and the rest of the cards, then remove your right hand.

You will now find it easy to lift two cards as one with your right thumb and fingers. Put your thumb underneath at the left lower corner and your fingers on top. Holding the two cards exactly together, turn your right hand and the two cards as one face up. Call attention to the red ace. Replace the two cards face down and deal the top one on the table, calling it the red ace. (Actually it's the black.)

Put the next card under the packet calling it the black ace. (It's the red.)

Lift the two top cards as one. Show the second red ace. Replace face down and deal the top card with the first ace. Have a spectator cover that pack and a second spectator hold the two cards which remain.

The trick is over before the onlookers are aware that it has started. Red is now black, and black, red.

THE CARD REVEALED

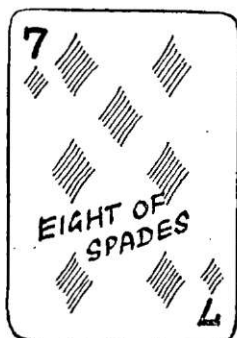
This is not a "you-take-it-I'll-find-it", but a feature mystery. It can be shown in the parlor or on the stage. Mentalists will find it a pleasing variation from their name and number feats.

After a spectator chooses a card from his pack, the performer says he will reveal the name of the chosen card in an unusual way.

He has a second helper select another card and hold this card face downwards between his hands. The magician asks the first spectator to picture his card in his mind. The performer concentrates and announces that he now knows the card's identity.

He removes a pen from his pocket and tells his audience that many modern pens write under water, but his writes on air.

He removes the cap and makes a few quick scrawls in space in the direction of the card the second spectator holds.



This gentleman now turns his card face up. On it in thick black letters is the name of the card the first assistant selected.

Needed—A pack of cards made up in this way. The top fifteen cards are all the same—eights of spades. The rest of the cards, except the bottom one, which is unprepared, have "Eight of Spades" written in India ink on their surfaces.

Hold this special deck face down in your left hand. With the pack in this position, the top fifteen cards are eights of spades and the cards below them all have "Eight of Spades" written on their faces, except the bottom card.

Fan the deck in this manner. Hold the deck's lower right hand corner tightly between your left thumb and curled index finger—thumb on top, finger on the bottom.

Press down and around in a half circle to the right on the deck's upper left hand corner with your right thumb. The pressure causes a perfect fan. It does, that is, if you practice until you have mastered the move.

Care must be taken in the fanning. The top fifteen cards must be held together and not opened in the fan.

You may now show the deck front and back by a turn of your left hand. Though to the casual spectator it seems that the entire pack is shown, *only* the index corners of the cards are visible. This is the usual way of displaying a pack of cards and no one should have the slightest suspicion that the cards are prepared. Afterwards your audience will remember that the cards were freely shown at the start of the feat.

Close the fan and holding the cards face down in your left hand, push them across one by one to your right hand as you approach a spectator. When you invite him to take a card he has a free choice—of fifteen cards. You don't have to be a master magician to make sure that he takes one of the fifteen.

Announce that you are about to find the card in a novel way.

Make another pressure fan, show it front and back and instruct a second spectator to touch any card as you extend the face down fan.

When a card is touched, pull it an inch out of the fan. Turn your left hand, and the cards, over. Point to the protruding card. (It's "Eight of Spades" message is hidden by the rest of the deck) and say—

"I want you to hold this card tightly between your hands." Turn the fan face down, slide the selected card out of the pack and into one of his hands. Tell him to put his other hand above it.

Dispose of the rest of the cards in your side pocket. Take out your fountain pen and make your marks in space.

The name of the chosen card, to everyone's surprise but your own, appears on the second card.

Until you follow these instructions with a pack in your own hands, you will not fully appreciate the subtlety of this feat.

The principle of showing a pack by fanning it, yet having a message written on all the cards but one has many other uses.

You can cause a "spirit" message of the sum of several numbers added together to appear.

THE CARD CALL

One of your local radio stations has invited you to appear as a guest on an interview program. The program director suggests that you tell something of the background of magic and perform a trick.

The interview about magic's history will be simple, but conjuring over the air calls for a little thought.

May I make a suggestion?

Here's a trick and how it will sound to your listeners.

"Thanks very much for those fascinating stories of magic and magicians," the announcer says. "Now, how about a trick for our listeners."

"Happy to perform one," you reply. "I have here a pack of fifty two cards. Cut the pack, replace the cut. Another time please, another cut, another squaring up of the pack.

"Do you think you can send a telepathic message?"

"I'll try," answers the announcer.

"Very well, then take a card from the pack. You have one? Yes. If you prefer, you can replace it and take another. Satisfied with the one you have? You don't want to change it for the ace of hearts or six of spades or any other card? No.

"Before I go any further, please look through the rest of the pack and assure the listeners that the cards are all different and that I am using an ordinary pack."

"It looks OK to me," says the announcer. "But what about telling me the name of the card I selected?"

"Why not something more dramatic," you answer. "Your telephone is ringing."

The announcer lifts the receiver, identifies himself and a voice at the other end says:

"This is a friend of your magician. He asked me to be on the alert for a telepathic message tonight. I received one. Your card is the two of clubs. Right?"

"Right," echoes the announcer weakly.

Method—This impossible-sounding feat is based on a set-up pack.

Shuffle any pack of cards thoroughly, then jot down the names of the cards in sequence. Give this list to your friend, who is to help with your radio performance.

The deck is still in this order when you remove it from its case in the radio station. Cutting and recutting, as long as single cuts are made and completed, will not disturb the sequence.

When the announcer removes his card, cut the pack at the point where he removed a card and complete the cut. This brings the card which was above his card to the bottom of the deck.

As the announcer looks at his card, peep at the bottom card. When you ask him if he doesn't want to change his mind, mention two cards. The first is the cue to your friend. He looks at his list. The card next to the mentioned card is the one the announcer now holds.

Incidentally he should place his call for the station early in the interview and hold the line to make sure of perfect timing.

But what if the announcer should decide to change his mind? Simply have him replace his card. Cut the deck several times and repeat the procedure as before.

Your friend who is waiting to call will have the radio turned on and will adjust his answer accordingly.

This is a surefire publicity stunt.

You can give the cards to the announcer as a memento of your visit. Every time he uses them thereafter you may be sure that he'll tell the story of the terrific stunt performed over the air for him.

CARD AND TELEPHONE

Here is another impressive card and telephone trick which may be used as a party stunt, a publicity test or in a radio station.

If there is a simpler, more to the point method I've never heard of it.

Borrow a pack or use your own.

The announcer (or spectator) shuffles the cards and hands them to the magician.

The magician spreads the cards ribbon-fashion across the table for a selection. His volunteer helper looks at a card and replaces it.

The telephone rings. The announcer picks it up.

"You have a card in mind," says the voice. "Hold the cards face up in your hand and read them off."

The announcer calls the cards one by one until the voice at the other end of the wire stops him. "You've passed your card. It was the ————" and the voice names the correct card.

Method—The cards have been shuffled and the announcer has made his choice. All the performer has to do is lift off ten cards, have the spectator replace his card, then replace the ten.

It is an easy matter to count ten as the cards are spread ribbon-wise on the table—and subsequently to pick up that portion of the deck.

That's all there is to it. Your assistant who phones knows the selected card will be the eleventh from the top. Therefore, as soon as the announcer reaches the eleventh card, your friend names it and brings the trick to a terrific climax.

Until this card is read off by the announcer neither you nor your help has any idea of its identity.

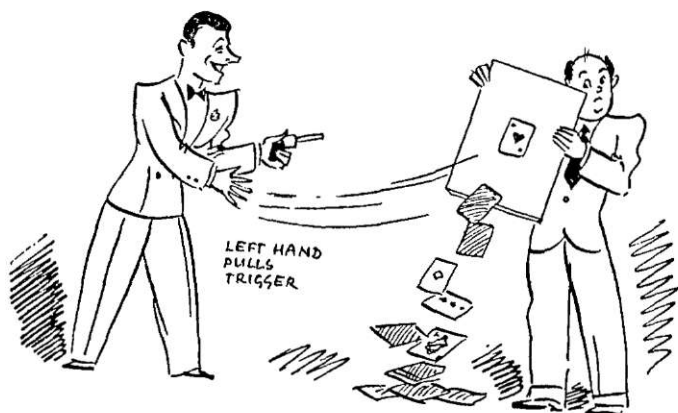
This is an effective radio trick because of its simplicity. Airwaves magic must be reduced to its least complicated plot. Unless the listener can follow the action, unless it is clear enough for him to describe what apparently happened to his friends later, it misses the mark.

SHOOTING A CARD

Orson Welles, himself a magician of parts, remarked the other day that many of the best feats in magic are no longer being done.

I agreed wholeheartedly and cited the card-shooting trick. A favorite of many 18th century magicians including the famous Pinetti, it is seldom seen now.

The old methods are outmoded, but the effect itself has all the elements of a modern talk-provoking sensation. Here is a method streamlined to suit the times.



After a selected card has been replaced in the pack, the performer takes the pack in one hand and a pistol in the other. A spectator holds a large board, cork on the front steel on the back.

The wizard throws the cards and fires at the same time. When the smoke clears away, one card — the selected card — is found tacked to the center of the cork target.

Needed — A two by three foot board with a steel plate on the reverse side. A pistol, a blank cartridge, a deck of cards and a thumb tack.

When a card has been chosen the performer tells the spectator to tear off one of the corners and replace the card in the pack.

The magician shuffles the cards, then holding the pack in his left hand, covers it with his right. He places his right thumb under the lower left hand corner of the face down pack and pulls up, letting the edges fly back. A click sound and a sudden break in the flow will indicate he has reached the chosen card. If he doesn't find the card with one test, he turns the deck around and tests the corner diagonally opposite.

This is done as he talks. Finding the torn corner card, he cuts it to the top.

A spectator is told to pick up the target board and stand several feet away. Under the cover of the spectator's actions, the performer takes a thumb tack from his pocket and pushing the top (chosen) card over the edge of his deck, he quickly forces the thumb tack up through it about half way down and a quarter inch in — with the point sticking out of the back of the card. Then he straightens the pack.

Still holding the pack he picks up the pistol with the same hand and "loads" it with a thumb tack. Actually he clips the tack between the second and third fingers of his right hand as he pretends to drop it down the barrel.

He gives the pistol to another spectator with instructions to shoot at the board when he throws the pack.

"Ready, aim." He changes his mind and decides to do the shooting himself. He shifts the deck to his right hand. Fingers on the face, thumb on the

back just under the extended point of the thumb tack, and holds the pistol in his left hand.

The magician warns the spectator to hold the board solidly and not to drop it when he fires.

He throws the deck with an overhand toss of his right hand so that the back of the deck and the tumb tack point is toward the board. Simultaneously he fires the pistol.

The force of the deck implants the thumb tack and the chosen card on the cork board. The board may be taken to the spectator who chose the card so that he can fit his corner to the fastened card, or the implanted card may be removed and given to the spectator for the fitting job.

The performer should practice hurling the cards and firing his pistol until the actions are synchronized. The reason for the steel plate behind the cork board (the performer can explain in his dramatic build-up) is to provide protection for the spectator holding the target when the pistol is fired.

Some wizards have a net basket extending forward from the bottom of the cork board to catch the cards and keep them from falling helter-skelter over the floor.

CHAPTER FIVE

Mental Magic

Primitive people regarded the first sleight of hand men much as modern audiences do mentalists.

Today's spectators believe they know something about sleight of hand, something about stage illusions. They tab the manipulator and conjurer as entertainers pure and simple. But mentalists — mind readers — are accepted in a different vein. Didn't Mr. Rhine of Duke University say that telepathy was possible? Haven't many scientists vouched for the strange talents of some individuals?

They reason that thoughts are read with no hocus-pocus, back palming or trap doors, and, of course, they reason wrongly.

Announce a "mental trick" and you are assured of an attentive audience.

Joseph Dunninger, a magician and stage illusionist in other days, has accomplished the almost impossible. He has succeeded in convincing large radio audiences that he can read the minds of those in the studio from which he broadcasts. Let an announcer say a wizard has made a horse disappear and the listener says to himself: "Oh, yeah. If I were there I'd see how he did it — if he did it."

Let the same announcer state that Dunninger has read his secret thought and the listener gives up. He, like the studio audience, is convinced that that is what happened.

Even with his present television programs Dunninger's technique is outstanding. The viewer has no chance to discover his methods.

THINK OF A CITY

The first feat offered by a mentalist should be quick and convincing. If he can present it without leaving his stage or platform so much the better.

With a knowledge of the conditions under which a program of mental

magic is presented and the handicaps under which the performer works, I offer a test that before long should find a place in many repertoires.

The mentalist invites his audience to call out the names of several cities. He openly writes them on a large slate as they are named.

A volunteer is chosen at random, perhaps by throwing a ping pong ball into the audience. He is told to select mentally one of the chosen cities. As he concentrates the performer turns the side of the slate bearing the cities toward himself and makes a chalk mark.

"Please tell everyone the name of the city you have in mind", the mentalist directs.

When the volunteer complies with his request, the performer immediately swings the slate around. Opposite the thought-of city is his chalk mark.

Method: The "slate" is a 12 by 18-inch section of blank cardboard. Two small Alnico magnets are responsible for the trick's success. One is covered with chalk on all sides except the bottom. The other is painted black, except for the bottom. Some performers may wish to have a machinist smooth all sides of the magnets before painting or chalking them.

Put the chalk-covered magnet bottom side down on the side of the slate upon which you will write later.

Put the other magnet, bottom side toward the slate on the opposite side, directly underneath the first magnet. Magnetic attraction will hold both magnets to the slate even though you do not touch them. If you move one magnet, the other magnet on the opposite side will follow its path exactly.

When the mentalist begins his performance he holds the slate so that the fingers of his right hand cover the black magnet on the lower side, and his thumb hides the chalked magnet on the side closest to his body.

He asks for the cities to be named. He writes the first five as called, one under the other.

The performer puts the chalk in his pocket. He holds the slate with the writing side toward himself. Left hand on one edge of the slate, right hand on the other.

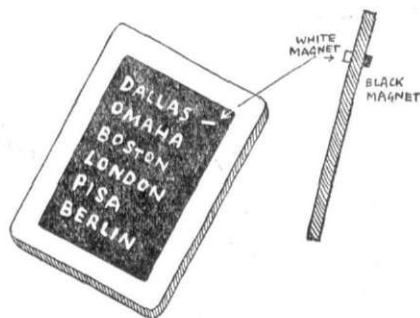
The fingers of his right hand on the under side move the black magnet until the chalked magnet on his side is opposite the name of the third city.

This position facilitates its movement in either direction if necessary when a city is selected. If the spectator names the third city the performer has nothing more to do — except to swing the slate around and show his chalk mark opposite the correct name.

If one of the other cities is called, the mentalist slides the black magnet until the chalked one is in the right place. Then he turns the board so all may see.

The moving of the magnet and the turning of the slate can be blended into one smooth move with enough practice. The movement of the right hand should not be preceptible. This can be accomplished by tilting the slate forward and running your hand along the edges. The hand remains at the same level; it is the slate which is moved.

When the slate is turned at the finish, it may be held with the finger tips



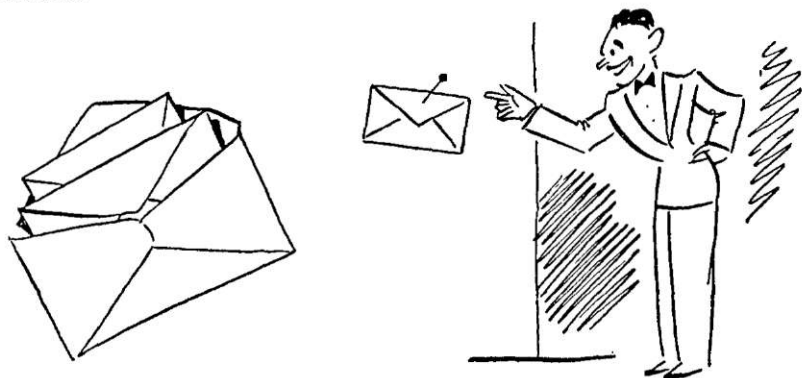
of your hands at the outer opposite edges since the magnets hold themselves in place.

The small chalk-covered magnet looks exactly like a chalk mark a few feet away.

If the trick is repeated, of course, you must make believe that you erase the chalk mark, then make a new one.

PROGNOSTICATION

The mentalist fastens a sealed envelope to the wall with a thumb tack. He explains that the envelope contains a smaller envelope and that a still smaller one. And in the third there is a slip of paper on which he has written a prediction.



His prediction depends upon the occasion — perhaps the winner of a World Series game, the name of a city's new mayor or the winner of a prize fight.

When the results of the game, election or fight come in, the performer pulls out the thumb tack and takes down the envelope.

He opens it and removes the second envelope. He opens that and removes the third envelope. He passes this to someone in the audience who removes the slip of paper from it and reads what is written thereon. It is the winner's name.

Because of its delightful simplicity this test is easy to perform and leaves the audience completely baffled.

Method: One large envelope, two medium-size envelopes, two small envelopes, two slips of paper and a thumb tack are the essential props.

Write the name of one contestant or team on each slip of paper. Seal a slip in each small envelope, then seal each small envelope in a medium-size one. Put the two medium-size envelopes in the large one and seal it.

Now no matter which team or man wins you can rip open the large envelope and take out a set of envelopes which will have the triumphant name listed on a slip of paper.

Caution — If you think there is a possibility of a tie, or if a third contestant complicates matters, use three sets of medium size envelopes. This one should contain a slip, reading: "The score will be tied" or the third man's name as the case may be.

This is an excellent publicity feature. Don't ignore it because of its lack of complexity. The most direct, least involved methods are always best.

In this feat the performer can concentrate on his presentation devoting a minimum of effort to the actual operation.

THE ACTION TEST

During World War II when my army unit entertained troops in Europe I frequently presented a routine of mental effects for replacement outfits. Most talked of afterwards was "the action test."

I passed six slips of papers to spectators in different parts of the audience and told each man who received one to write some simple action he would like to see me carry out.

"For instance", I explained. "You might ask me to shake hands with the band leader, snap my fingers, unbutton my field jacket or something similar."

I would then ask a soldier in the front row to hold up his helmet. When he did this I would announce:

"You've been selected as a committee of one to collect the slips in your helmet."

Oh yes, I told each soldier to fold his slip in half, then in quarters so that it would be impossible for me to tell one slip from another just by looking at them. As the slips were collected I reminded the spectators that those who wrote, wrote their own thoughts. I had not influenced them.

When the G.I. with his helmet full of slips of paper reached the front row, I asked him to tap two other soldiers on the shoulders. Thus they were designated as a committee to assist me.

With the three servicemen on the stage beside me, I continued:

"Six soldiers have written six suggestions on six slips. I want one of them selected."

I directed one of my committeemen to draw a slip and pass it to the other two volunteer assistants. I asked all three of them to think of the requested action. To concentrate intensely.

While they concentrated I wrinkled my brow, held up my right hand, partly to quiet the audience and partly for effect.

I turned left for a few steps, stopped and looked puzzled. I turned the other way, then hesitated again. Finally in a burst of inspiration, I performed the action.

Then I swung around to the GI's and asked them to read aloud the slip — which, of course, suggested the action I had just carried out.

Weeks afterwards if we returned to the same outfit, this was the feat remembered best.

The routine, you will be glad to know, is just as effective with a civilian audience. Have your slips collected on a tray and otherwise proceed according to the above description.

Method: Earlier I had written on a slip matching those passed out "take off the sergeant's glasses and pass them to the captain" or some other easily performed move.

While the slips were collected I calmly put my right hand in my trouser pocket and palmed out this slip. Don't let the word "palm" stop you. Simply hold the slip in your hand with the fingers curled, back to the audience. No one will suspect it. Few spectators look for sleight of hand when a performer is supposed to be reading their minds.

When a slip was selected from the helmet, I reached for it with my left hand, commenting: "This slip has been freely selected." Whereupon I passed the

slip to my right hand, where I put it directly over the slip I'd taken from my pocket. I pulled the chosen slip back with my thumb, turned my hand palm down and passed the other (my selection) slip to the waiting soldier.

To get rid of the palmed slip I simply reached in the helmet with my right hand, took out several slips. "One was selected", I said, then I dropped them—and the palmed one—back.

BEST SELLER BOOK TEST

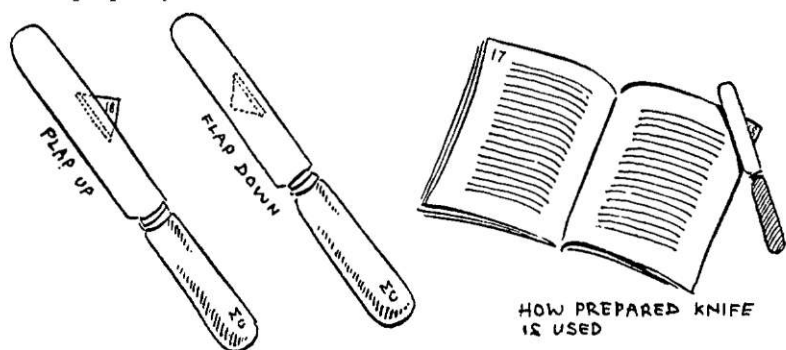
Book tests in which columns of numbers must be added or cards selected to indicate pages seem illogical to me. Here is a straight forward method which may be used either in a close-up routine or on a stage.

The mentalist writes a prediction on a slip of paper and seals it in an envelope. He calls attention to two books on the current best seller lists. A spectator chooses one.

The performer picks up a table knife and tells another spectator to insert the knife in the book. If the first thrust doesn't satisfy the spectator, he may withdraw the knife and try again.

The book is opened to the place where the knife rests and the page number is called out, "Should anyone wish to check up later", the performer explains.

A spectator reads the first sentence on this page aloud. The mentalist rips open his envelope, which has been in full view all the while, he withdraws the slip of paper and passes it to a second spectator to read. It is the identical sentence. His prophecy was correct.



Method — Needed: two best sellers, an envelope, two similar pieces of paper, a pencil, a prepared knife.

The knife is prepared in this way. The index corner of a page book is cut away and fastened to a knife blade with a piece of adhesive or Scotch tape. (See illustration). It is hinged so that it may be folded out of sight behind the knife or opened into view.

The first sentence on the page number the knife bears is written on a piece of paper and put in the unsealed envelope. This, with the matching piece of paper and pencil, is in the performer's side coat pocket. The prepared knife either is in his inside coat pocket or on a table close by.

The mentalist writes a prediction and seals it in an envelope. His prediction is the first sentence on the page the trick knife indicates in the second book.

This is put beside the first slip in the envelope. So no matter which book

is chosen the proper sentence will be available. A spectator holds the sealed envelope.

A second spectator chooses one of the two books.

The performer holds the chosen book in his left hand and the knife, with the prepared side away from the audience, in his right hand.

He tells the spectator to take his right wrist and guide the knife into any part of the book. When the spectator shoves his hand, the mentalist pushes up the flap on the knife with his thumb under cover of the book.

Holding the book tightly in his left hand, pressing the covers so that the knife won't fall out, the performer removes his right hand from the knife and briefly summarizes what has gone before.

Again grasping the knife handle he moves the knife up the pages until its flap covers the actual page number. (See illustration).

Pressing his right thumb on the knife blade to hold the flap in place, he opens the book and asks a spectator to call off the page number.

The spectator reads, of course, the number on the flap.

The magician closes the book and in so doing folds the flap back on the blade and withdraws the knife.

He passes the book to an onlooker with instructions to open it at the page number announced and read aloud the first sentence.

While this is being done the magician replaces the knife in his inside coat pocket.

The mentalist reminds the audience that he wrote a prediction in advance. He tears off the end of the envelope and pulls out the proper piece of paper. The envelope, with the other paper still hidden, he discards in his side pocket.

The performer passes the slip for a spectator to read. It is the same sentence.

THE CARD REFLECTED

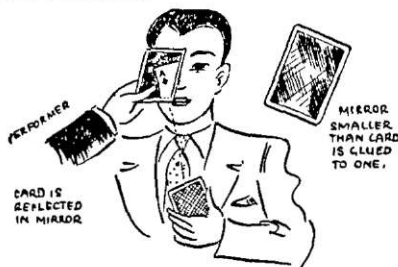
The wizard removes his pack from the case, and spreading the cards face down, offers a spectator the choice of any card. The spectator is told to vividly impress the card on his mind. The wizard concentrates a bit, then removes a card of the same color from the deck, then one of the same number. He names the thought of card. The spectator confirms his selection.

Method — A thin metal mirror, slightly smaller in all directions than a playing card, is glued to the face of the joker. This mirror card is placed on the bottom of the deck, mirror side down, and the deck is enclosed in its case.

When you are ready to perform, announce a mind reading mystery. Take the cards from the case and give them an overhand shuffle bringing the mirror card to the top of the deck. (Its mirror side is down naturally.)

As the performer talks he turns the cards face up, spreads them, then closes the deck. He must be careful to prevent the mirror's coming into view. The purpose of this flourish is to convince the spectator that a normal pack is used.

He shuffles the pack again, bringing the mirror card to the bottom. Now he extends the cards for a choice.



When a card is taken the spectator is told to hold it in his left hand about 12 inches from his eyes.

"Now hold your right hand over your right eye," the performer says, as he covers the spectator's right eye with the pack of cards he holds as an illustrating gesture. The mirror on the bottom of the pack reflects the chosen card. As soon as he sees the card the wizard withdraws the pack.

From this point in everything depends on the performer's acting ability. He knows the name of the card and it is up to him to reveal it in as dramatic a fashion as possible.

Removing first a card of the right color, then right suit makes the effect look much more difficult than if the wizard named the card immediately.

It is good showmanship to make an easy trick look exacting, then suddenly bring it to a successful finish.

I wouldn't suggest that this feat be repeated. If, however, the performer wants to go on with other card tricks he has only to drop the pack in his pocket during his climax, then bring it out again later minus the mirror card.

The moves used to sight the chosen card were developed by the late Jardine Ellis for one of his feats in which he duplicated a drawing made by a spectator on a piece of notebook paper. In Mr. Ellis' case the mirror was concealed in the back of his notebook.

WATER VISION

The ancients, so historians tell us, not only saw the future in crystal balls but also in clear goblets of water and bowls of ink.

Here is a way to cause visions to appear in a glass of water. Visions, you will be happy to know, of anything you desire.

Several dinner guests may peer into your glass of water and see nothing — except the water. Whenever you wish someone to have "crystal vision", make a pass or two in front of his eyes and he will envisage exactly what you want him to see in the water. The name of a card, a number or even the winner of the day's headline race.

Method — Write whatever information you want to project in the water on a stamp size piece of paper. Coat the writing surface with an adhesive wax, or simply write on the sticky side of a three cent stamp. During dinner stick the stamp, or bit of paper, to the bottom of your drinking glass.

Later during your tricks you can hold the glass up to several spectators' eyes, and unless they look directly down from above (which you must be careful to prevent), they will see nothing but water.

Give the glass to someone to hold. Make your mystic passes and tell him to look down in the water. He brings your trick to a successful conclusion by telling what he sees.

PARLOR TELEPATHY

If there is a lull in the party, mention telepathy and say you're willing to try a few tests. Should your guests be in the mood, proceed as follows.

Pass out a dozen slips of paper. Tell each person to write a name, telephone number or a few words on his slip, then fold the papers in halves and quarters, so that they will all look alike.

Gather the slips in a borrowed hat. Mix them thoroughly, then remove one. Tell the impressions you receive when you hold the slip to your head.

Sometimes you describe exactly what is written, other times you give a near enough description to convince your audience when the slips are opened and read.

Method — This is a one man routine. No previous preparation is necessary.

When you gather the slips in the borrowed hat, put the hat on a table in one corner of the room and stand behind it. Be sure that no one can see inside the hat.

As you mix the slips, secretly open one and place it on top of the others in the bottom of the hat.

Reach in to get a slip and glance quickly at the open paper. Remember what you read.

Call out the word letter by letter after seeming to struggle a bit to get the information. Open the paper to reinforce your statements. Apparently read off what is written, but really recite what you saw on the open paper in the hat.

Memorize the writing on this slip and give this information when you pick up the next slip.

Continue this process until the hat is empty.

As each slip is read, put it in your pocket. A skeptical guest might read what is written on the note if you dropped it on the table.

When you come to the last slip — the open one —, fold it in the hat before bringing it out, and as in the case of previous reading, give the information on the paper you glanced at immediately before.

To make the test more convincing occasionally make a slight error in a letter or a word. If presented too patly, the feat will be less impressive.

If a phone number is written describe a person going to a phone to dial, then call the numbers. If it's a nickname, give the given name first, then the nickname.

With such a trick as this one many unscrupulous operators who claim aid from spirits make fabulous reputations and sizeable fortunes.

CALLING THE NUMBERS

Three spectators take dollar bills from their wallets, crumple them into balls and drop them on a slate. One is selected by another member of the audience.

He opens it and impresses the serial number on his mind. The wizard jots several numbers down on his slate. When the serial number is told to the audience the mentalist holds up his slate so that all may see it tallies with the number just recited.

Method: — The mentalist memorizes the serial number of a dollar and rolls the dollar into ball form previous to his exhibition.

If he can't remember the number, he can write it in small figures with pencil on one side of his slate. This, though visible to him, will be unperceived by his audience.

During his program he requests three spectators to crumple dollars. He walks through the audience gathering the bills on his slate which he holds tray like between his hands. Concealed in his right hand under the tray is his own dollar.

He offers another spectator a choice of the three bills. The spectator is told to touch one. When he does the mentalist holds the tray by his left hand only, removes his right and picks up the bill and passes it to the spectator.

When his right hand picks up the balled dollar, he switches it for his own dollar. This he gives to the spectator. Still holding the other dollar, he once more grips the right side of the tray and passes the remaining two dollars back to two of the people who lent him money with a word of thanks.

He tells the third spectator not to worry; his money will be returned at the finish of the experiment.

The mentalist puts his right hand in his right side pocket ostensibly to get a piece of chalk. He leaves the crumpled bill in his pocket as he removes the chalk.

He directs the spectator with the crumpled dollar to open it and note the serial number. Meanwhile the wizard writes the number he memorized or reads from his pencil jotting on the slate.

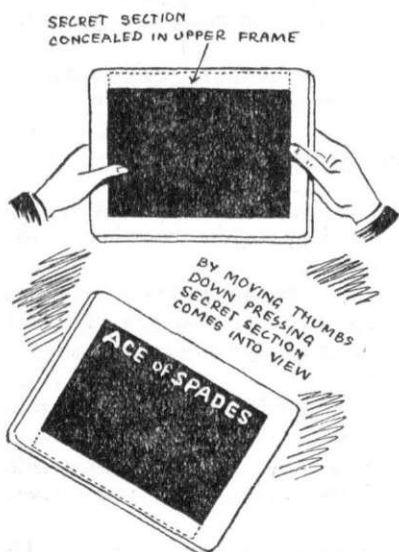
He asks the spectator to read the serial number aloud.

Then he turns his slate around and reads off the number he has written, holding them up at the same time so that the audience can see for itself. Naturally, the figures are accurate.

Before he goes on to another test he makes sure that the dollar gets back to its rightful owner.

THE CHRISTOPHER SLATE

Though it appears to be an ordinary school slate, this ingenious device can be used in many ways. If the mentalist draws a circle on it, an onlooker may see therein the name of a chosen card, or a person's name.



If the performer wants a list of 20 or 30 words at his command without memorizing them he can have them at his finger tips with this device.

Method: The center section of the slate is movable. The top and bottom sides are hollow and the magician may move this sliding section by pressure with his thumbs either up or down.

Thus a three-fourths inch strip as long as the center section itself is hidden until it is slid into view.

Suppose the mentalist wants a spectator to aid in a mental trick. He draws a circle on the slate and calls it a crystal ball.

He shows this to the audience then tells a volunteer assistant to gaze at the slate. The writing side of the slate is turned away from the audience and the secret space is pulled down into view. On it is printed whatever word

the wizard desires the spectator to name.

The slate also may be used in a baffling book test.

The entertainer shows 20 disks each of which bears a number from one to 20. He drops them in his side pocket and has a members of the audience reach in and select one.

Someone else calls out the number of a page. Count to the page number called and to the word indicated by the number on the selected disk. The performer writes a word on his slate.

The word selected and the word he writes are the same.

The word number is forced as described in "The Name Appears" earlier in this book — disks taking the places of folded slips.

Suppose the 4 is forced. The fourth word on every page of the book to be used is written in small letters on the slate's secret panel.

As soon as the page number is called, the wizard pulls down the secret section and notes the word on that page.

He shoves the word section back into the top frame, then prints the word he glanced at in large letters on the face of the slate.

When the spectator counts over to the word in the book, the performer may swing the slate around and show that he has written it long before.

CHAPTER SIX

Stage Magic

A trick does not necessarily have to be large to be effective on stage. Cardini performs his card and cigarette manipulations in such theaters as New York's Radio City Music Hall and Capitol.

A stage trick should be visible in the last row of the theatre. If only part of an audience can see what happens only that part will applaud.

Mystery alone is not enough these days. The audience must be entertained. The first half of John Calvert's show may be used as any example. Calvert wears sports clothes, not the customary white tie and tails. He presents his tricks jauntily, sometimes with humorous quips. Occasionally he whistles along with the orchestra.

His assistants are attractive girls, who wear costumes with eye appeal.

Calvert blends magic, music and acting ability. The result: entertainment.

Roy Benson performs some magnificent sleight of hand during his vaudeville act, but it is his witty remarks and friendly manner that puts him across.

The tricks that follow are especially suited for stage work. They are colorful, novel and rapid-paced. All they need is a clever wizard to present them.

THE PERSISTENT RADIO

The magician approaches the microphone carrying a small radio. He switches it on. The set warms up and out pours a program of dance music.

He detaches the wire which runs from the base of the radio to the wings. The set still plays.

"Aha", say the wise ones. "A battery."

The magician takes off the top of the radio and spins it off stage. He takes out the inner section of the tubes and connections and tosses that off.

The set plays on.

He removes the left side of the cabinet, the right, the rear and the base.

With only the front panel remaining, the set continues to work. He pulls off one knob and tosses the front panel away. Though he holds only a tiny knob the music persists.

He turns the knob. There is a sharp click and the music stops.

He squeezes the last remaining part; it disappears.

Method — Offstage an assistant holds a small radio to another microphone. He watches the performer closely. When the magician switches on his stage set, the assistant switches on the offstage set. If the performer moves his radio a little away from the stage microphone or brings it closer, his assistant follows suit.

The radio the performer uses is a hollow shell with a center section simulating a real radio's interior. The cabinet is so constructed that the various parts may be removed quickly.

When the wizard shuts off his set, the assistant does the same. All that remains is the knob.

This is vanished by the simple sleight of hand move of apparently putting it in the left hand, while the right hand retains it.

The wizard closes his left hand as though it contains the knob and seems to squeeze it. He opens his hand. The knob has disappeared.

The most important part of the trick's presentation is the performer's acting. He must convince himself that the sound is coming from his shell set and the audience will be convinced too.

The step by step tearing down of the set and the persistent music allows the effect to build to an excellent climax.

POP GOES THE RABBIT

There are dozens of complicated devices which stage sorcerers have used to "vanish" rabbits. Many are so large and obviously mechanical that modern audiences aren't especially mystified when they are finally shown empty.

In this up-to-the-minute trick the simplest of properties are used with a maximum effect.

The magician lowers a rabbit into a paper bag. He twists the top and holding the bag away from his body, approaches the footlights.

With his free hand he secures a revolver, takes aim and fires it point-blank at the bag. Tossing the smoking firearm to a waiting assistant, he crushes the bag. The rabbit has vanished.

Here is a trick with strong audience appeal. A visual mystery with a smash finish.

Method — A specially constructed bag is used. This is easy to make. Get two number nine grocers bags. Cut six inches off the top of one and staple the rest of this bag inside the matching bag.

Thus anything put in the large bag goes into the inner bag, which supports it about half way up from the bottom.

The rabbit used, though it seems to be real, is actually the skin of a rabbit, which has been prepared by a taxidermist. This rabbit has a spring body and it may be collapsed so to occupy a very small space.

With a little practice, the average performer can handle this imitation rabbit so that it appears to be real.

Hold it by the nape of its neck between your thumb and first and second fingers. This is the correct way to hold a real rabbit, not as many believe by the ears.

With your little finger jiggle the animal's body. The result is a life-like animation.

Don't overdo it. As Al Baker, the genial New York wizard, once shrewdly pointed out, the only way an audience can tell the fake rabbits from the real ones is that the imitation ones have much more life!

Put the rabbit in the paper bag, pressing it so that it folds up in the inner bag. Twist the top of the bag to hold it in place.

As you walk to the footlights jiggle the bag with your little finger slightly. This simulates a live bunny kicking inside.

Hold the bag as if it contains a real rabbit. This is extremely important in the proper presentation of the trick. Imagine the bag is as heavy as it would be were a real rabbit inside.

Fire your pistol, toss it aside, then crush the bag between your hands. Even with the imitation animal in the inner bag the outer bag will press almost flat.

The trick is over. The rabbit has vanished.

FOLDA FLOWER

The wizard displays a sheet of red tissue paper and announces he will twist it into a boutonniere for his button hole.

The band strikes up a lively tune as he bends, folds and otherwise manhandles the tissue. The harder he works the less it looks like a flower.

Finally he signals the music to stop. He looks at his crumpled tissue, puts it experimentally against his lapel, then in desperation jams it in his coat pocket.

Immediately a perfectly formed flower blossoms in his buttonhole.

Method — A well made imitation flower is tied to the end of a long piece of black thread. The other end is passed through the eye of a needle.

The magician runs the needle through the open buttonhole of his lapel and through the cloth of his coat under it.

He pulls the thread through. He pushes the needle through his coat from the inside toward the outside so that its point emerges about a quarter of an inch below the top of his left side coat pocket.

The thread is pulled through and the needle is removed.

An adjustment is made in the length of the thread by this means. The flower in his buttonhole is pulled down and tucked into his breast pocket. The thread is drawn through the point inside his coat pocket until another movement pulls the flower out of its hiding place. Allowing an inch to be used in tying a button to the end, the extra thread is cut off.

With the button in place, the performer can cause the flower to jump to his button hole by simply putting his hand in his pocket, grasping the button and jerking downwards.

So much for the set-up.

In actual performance the wizard has an excellent excuse for jamming his hand in his pocket. It is to get rid of the irritating tissue paper.

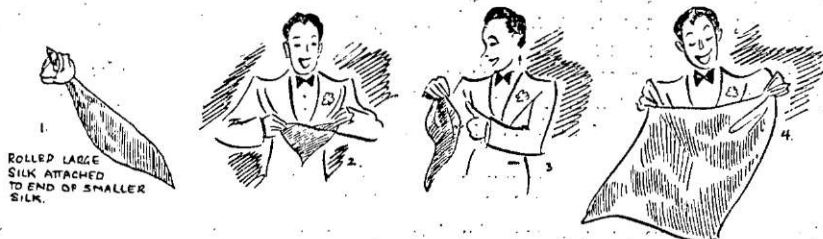
The performer must practice before a mirror until he gets the right amount of tug to cause the flower to appear "magically."

By way of variation the performer can have a matching flower in his button hole when he walks on stage. Then instead of tearing the tissue, he removes the flower, puts it in his pocket and immediately it hops back in place on his lapel.

Or the wizard may be wearing a yellow flower. He expresses annoyance and the wish he'd wore a red one. When he puts the yellow flower in his pocket the red posey obligingly appears.

STRETCHING A SILK

The wizard holds a red silk by its diagonal ends between his hands and attempts, without success, to stretch it. Finally he pushes the silk into his right fist, gives a squeeze or two, then allows it to billow out. It is several times its original size.



Method — One corner of a large, red silk is tied to the corner of a small, red silk by a piece of strong thread. The large silk is held by diagonal ends, twisted rope-wise and wound around the upper end of the small silk. The loose end is tucked in to make a tight package.

When performing, the magician takes the small silk from his right trouser pocket with his right hand. His hand holds the end to which the rolled-up larger silk is tied. His closed fingers hide this silk from view.

The magician holds the opposite diagonal end of the small silk in his left hand and tries to stretch the silk. Discouraged, he finally tucks the silk into his right fist. After a bit of squeezing for effect, he lets the large silk spring open, while his still closed hand hides the small silk.

As soon as the large silk begins to expand, the wizard uses his left hand to hold one corner so that the bulk of the silk may be shown.

Properly done, this expansion of silk is very striking.

FLOWER TO SILK

This is an excellent followup for the magician who opens his act by producing a flower in his button hole.

After the flower has appeared, the wizard removes it, gives it a shake and it changes visibly into a silk handkerchief.

Method — The silk is of the exact same shade as the flower. Before the show it is rolled into a small ball shaped bundle. One end wrapped around and tucked in its center keeps the bundle from unrolling.

This is in the wizard's right hand, which being partially closed conceals it from the audience.

As the right hand goes to the lapel, the wizard swings his body to the left. The right hand covers the flower and quickly pushes it down into the breast pocket, then it opens wide and brings the balled-up silk into view.

This because of its shape and color seems to be the flower.

Holding the silk at his finger tips, the performer pinches one corner between his fingers and with a shake lets the rest of the silk unwind. The change from "flower" to silk is very deceptive, and intriguing to watch.

BLENDED SILKS

As time goes by the technique of magic changes. Though the tricks may seem the same to an untutored observer, the methods differ greatly.

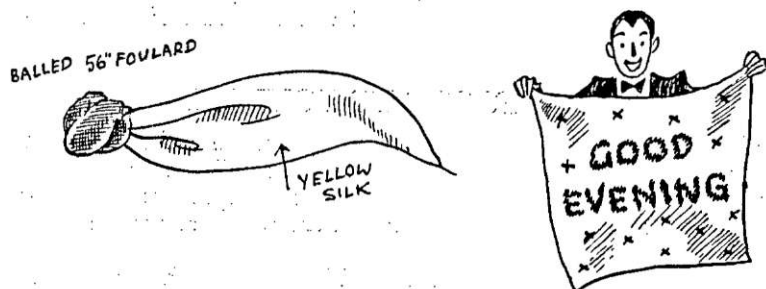
The present trend is toward simplification. The new ways to produce standard effects are less complicated than the old and easier to perform.

Strange as it may seem, the easy way to do a trick is the hard way to devise. Often it takes years before a trick is reduced to a method which can be learned readily.

Today amateurs can perform tricks which in the past only great technicians mastered.

If you think this simplification relates to magic alone compare an engine of fifty years ago with a modern model or for that matter the present electric light bulb with its forerunners.

In this feat the magician may at any time during his performance remove two colored silks from his pocket and by the simple process of crumpling them momentarily together change them into a single large foulard, made up of the two colors blended.



Method — Two sixteen inch square silks, one red, one yellow and one fifty-six inch foulard, red with a yellow center, are used.

Contrary to standard procedure, I roll my foulard this way. Holding it by diagonal corners, one in each hand, I twist it with a circular motion until it forms a rope-like shape. Then starting with one of the ends as a center, I wind it tightly. The remaining end is tucked in at the finish. This is to keep the bundle from springing apart.

One corner of the yellow silk is tucked into the center of this packet. (See illustration.) This prepared bundle is put in your right trouser pocket. Yellow silk first, the foulard ball above it.

The red silk is placed in your left trouser pocket. You are now set to do the trick whenever you like.

"A quick trick with a yellow silk", the performer begins. His right hand enters his right trouser pocket, closes around the foulard ball and brings it out. His closed fingers mask the foulard, the audience sees only the yellow silk hanging down from his finger tips.

"And a red silk". He withdraws the red silk from his other pocket with his left hand and displays it.

He gives both silks a little shake, then brings his hands together and balls the silks together. The colors seem to melt together.

With a waving motion, the magician gets both small silks pushed into his right fist. With his right thumb and index finger he takes hold of any outer roll of the foulard ball and snaps the bundle open.

The right hand (still masking the small silks) holds one corner of the large foulard, the left hand quickly reaches for another so that the foulard may be opened out quickly and effectively.

Many magicians prefer to sew tiny beads in the corners of foulards; this enables them to find them quickly by touch.

After the audience acknowledges the change of silks to foulard, the wizard crumples up the foulard and throws it to an assistant or nearby table. In so doing he wraps the concealed silks in its center and thus disposes of them neatly.

If desired the two colors, when blended, produce a foulard of a solid color with words written on it in the contrasting color. If the trick is used to open a magic act the foulard may read, "Good evening." If it is used as a finish — "Good night."

By using red and white silks the performer may bring a card trick to a climax by producing a gaint red and white replica of a chosen card.

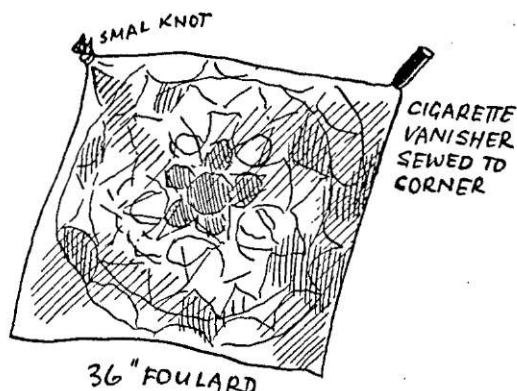
The principal advantage of this method over early ones is that unprepared silks are used and the operation is such that a minimum of skill is needed to produce an astonishing effect.

CIGARETTE TO FOULARD

The hand, despite the trite phrase, is not quicker than the eye. Most magic is done without rapid motions. It is a magician's ability to distract attention from vital points and not his speed that causes the spectators to be baffled.

Here is one of the comparatively few tricks which require great speed in execution.

The hocus-pocuser takes a puff from his cigarette, then pushes it down into his closed fist. Lightning-like a large square silk appears stretched between his hands. The cigarette (as if anyone is still concerned about that) has vanished!



Method — A small knot is tied in one corner of a thirty-six inch silk foulard. Affixed to the other upper end is a cigarette vanisher.

This is a metal tube slightly larger than a cigarette. When a cigarette is forced inside it, a spring holds the cigarette in place. (See illustration).

This is an excellent opening trick. The performer prepares by tucking the small knotted end of the foulard through a ring which he wears on his left hand. If he doesn't wear a ring, he should tie the foulard

to a circle of flesh-colored thread which prior to performance, he slips over his left ring finger.

The cigarette vanisher, open end up, is held in the left hand. The foulard is now bundled up so that the left hand can hold it and the cigarette vanisher when it forms a fist. Due to the compressibility of silk it is simple to fold the foulard as required. It's surprising how large a foulard a closed hand can conceal.

The magician enters with his left hand, back to the audience, by his side.

He takes a puff of the cigarette which his right hand holds, then pushes it, lighted end downwards into the cigarette vanisher which his left hand holds.

At once his right hand seizes the vanisher and both hands extend with the foulard billowing out between them. The change from lighted cigarette to colored silk is a colorful bit.

POP-THROUGH PRODUCTION FRAME

Stage magicians will welcome this colorful new production trick. It is fast-moving, direct in operation and especially effective when synchronized with music.

The wizard's assistant holds a large wooden frame with a paper center between his outstretched hands.

"Call out any color", the magician invites.

Someone shouts: "Red."

The magician makes a gesture toward the frame and, zip, a red silk pops through the paper.

"Another color, please."

"Blue".

A second hocus-pocus motion and a blue silk breaks through into view. This may be repeated half a dozen times with different colors.

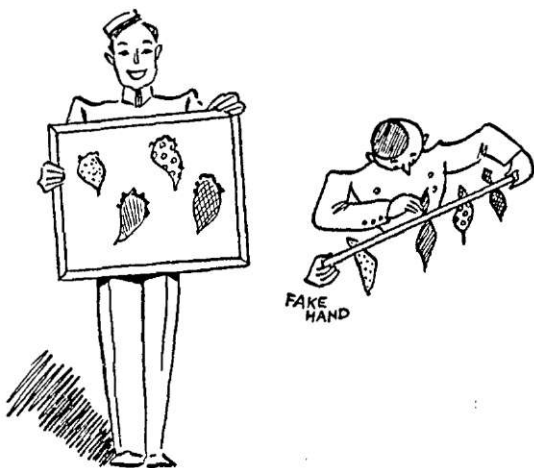
Method — A frame of light wood is used. The paper center is firmly tacked on all four sides.

A false hand, carved from wood and realistically painted is attached to one side so that from the front it seems that this is one of the assistant's hands when he holds the frame.

The silk which is to be produced is concealed in the assistant's jacket.

When the assistant enters with the frame, the side bearing the false hand is back to the audience. When the assistant shows both sides he swings the frame around bringing the reverse side into view.

His left hand alone supports the light frame. His right hand is free to work



the trick. From the spectator's viewpoint, he is holding the frame between his hands. The false hand matches his real hand perfectly.

As the colors are named the magician's helper pulls the silks from his jacket and pushes them smartly through the paper.

This feat must be seen to be fully appreciated. Each time the magician makes a gesture there should be a roll of the drums and each silk should break through the paper with an accompanying cymbal crash.

LIGHTER MAGIC

Theatre-goers relish incidental surprises in magicians' routines. Unbilled bits of humor and comedy add delightful touches to sleight of hand magic or large scale conjurations.

During some feat the wizard needs his cigarette lighter. He presses its release. Sparks, but no flame. He tries again — same result.

The audience is amused. Even a magician has trouble with a cigarette lighter.

Obviously annoyed, the wizard doesn't hurl the lighter into the wings or jam it back in his pocket, instead he strikes it on the bottom of his shoes match-like. It flames up immediately.

He suavely lights his cigarette and goes on with his trick.

Method — The wick is removed from a cigarette lighter and a wooden match is fitted into the wick receptacle so that the head of the match protrudes above the case.

The wizard lets the sparks fly enough times to amuse the audience, then lifts one foot and strikes the match head on the sole of his shoe.

With the resulting flame he lights his cigarette.

THE FLYING FLOWER

It is not necessary for a trick to be bulky or complicated to be successful in a stage show. Feats with small colorful objects are frequently the most applauded.

This trick uses a minimum of equipment, yet it can be seen in the last row of a large theater and if properly presented it packs a wallop.

The magician cuts a red carnation from the stem his assistant holds.

He carries it across stage, improvises a bag from his pocket handkerchief and drops the flower inside.

He flicks the handkerchief. It is empty.

At the same moment the flower pops back at the top of the the stem.

Method — The stem is hollow. A length of thin, string elastic runs from its base up through the center, over the top and down to the assistant's hand where a duplicate carnation is masked from view.

The carnation first seen is tucked in the top of the stem.

The wizard cuts it off and walks several paces away. He forms a bag from his handkerchief. This is really two handkerchiefs sewn together around the edges except at one two inch point.

When the performer takes the four corners in one hand, he spreads this two inch opening. The carnation is dropped inside.

When the handkerchief is opened, there is no trace of the flower. It is, of course, inside.

The assistant releases the carnation in his hand. The stretched elastic pulls it instantly to the top of the stem.

The two moves — the vanish in the handkerchief and the re-appearance at the top of the stem — should be exactly synchronized.

The trick is best presented with no comments to an orchestral accompaniment with special drum effects for the vanish and re-appearance.

Many men's shops stock carnations made of feathers which are exact replicas of the real flowers. These are well suited for use in this feat.

PROJECTION FRAME

This utility apparatus may be used in many ways. With its aid the wizard can cause a design, word or symbol to appear on an initialed, but otherwise blank, piece of cardboard.

The magician passes a large piece of white cardboard to a spectator and asks him to initial it in the lower right hand corner.

The performer slips this back in the frame from which it was removed at the beginning of the trick. The frame is placed with its back toward the spectators.

A card is chosen, a name is selected or a design is thought of. When the performer swings the frame around the correct mark or design now is scrawled across the face of the card.

Method — Between the black background of the frame and the front glass is another piece of glass which fits in a groove. The design which you cause to appear is painted on this second glass with a flat black paint.

The frame has two sections into which the cardboard may be slipped. Either in front or behind this faked glass. The cardboard is unprepared. If, however, is placed behind the faked glass, the design on the faked glass will appear to be on the card itself.

At the start of the trick the white cardboard is in the front section of the frame facing the audience.

The performer removes it and has it marked.

The design on the painted inner glass will merge with the black background of the frame and from the front the frame looks unprepared.

When the cardboard is returned to the entertainer, he picks up the frame in his left hand and turns it facing his body. With his right hand he drops the card into the section behind the faked glass.

He replaces the frame on the table with its back toward the front.

Whenever he desires he can turn the frame around and show that the design has materialized on the card, which bears the spectator's initials. Any good carpenter can build this frame in a short time.

It is wise to have several faked glass plates made up to give you a choice of design.

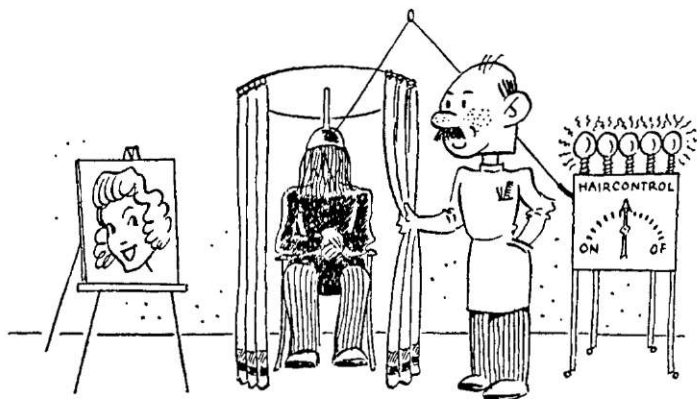
A HAIR RAISING ILLUSION

Here is a stage illusion which requires a minimum of equipment and does not depend on a trap. It offers a wonderful opportunity for humorous presentation.

The magician announces a "hair raising spectacle". He slips on a large

papier mache head and dons a white surgical gown. From this point on all of the action takes place in pantomime.

The curtains open on the office of a hair growing expert. To the audience's left is an easel which holds several amusing drawings of hair styles; a cabinet is in the center of the stage. A cup-shaped device extends down from the top of the cabinet. A chair is directly under the cup.



A wire runs from the cabinet to a control board on the right. The board is labeled "Hair Growing Control". A large switch is attached to the center of the board, and along the top is a row of electric bulbs.

A customer, who wears a long top coat and a felt hat, enters from the left. He approaches the magician, removes his hat and points to his bald head. The magician signals his assistant to bring the hair style cards from the easel.

The customer studies the drawings one by one, finally makes a choice. The magician puts the selected style card under his arm and ushers the customer into the cabinet. He is seated and the cup is clamped on his head.

The performer draws the front curtain of the cabinet closed, then motions to his assistant. The assistant throws the switch on the control board. The bulbs light up immediately and a whirring noise begins.

The magician walks to the left and replaces the hair style card on the easel. The control board on the other side of the stage explodes! The performer rushes across to turn it off. It explodes again and the light start to flicker.

He tries frantically to move the switch but it seems to be stuck. He waves his arms in agitation, turns to the cabinet, then back. At last he succeeds in shutting off the power. Both magician and assistant are obviously relieved. They rush to the cabinet and pull open the curtained front.

The machine has done its job too well. Long, shaggy hair flows down from the cup-shaped gadget completely covering the customer's face. The magician lifts off the cup, and taking the customer by the arm leads him to the footlights.

The audience's laughter changes to gasps of amazement. The magician lifts his papier mache head—he is the customer! The customer pulls off the enveloping hair—he is the magician.

Method: Three people play parts in this quick change mystery. The

magician, his assistant and a second assistant who is dressed to represent a customer. If the second assistant is not naturally bald, he wears a bald wig under his felt hat. Under his top coat is a white surgical gown which matches the one worn by the magician. In one pocket of the top coat is a shaggy wig. Both magician and customer must wear similar shoes, stockings and trousers.

As soon as the customer is seated and concealed by the curtain of the cabinet, he goes into action. He withdraws his head from the cup, removes his top coat which he drops on the chair, then he steps through the rear drapes of the cabinet where, unbeknownst to the audience, he waits.

The explosion occurs when the magician puts the style card on the easel. The easel, as you remember, is to the left near the back of the stage. The control board is at the right parallel to the easel. The cabinet is centered and toward the front. Thus the direct route across stage from the easel to the control board takes the performer behind the cabinet.

The moment the magician is out of view behind it, the customer (in matching surgical gown) pulls the prop head from the magician and slips it over his own. He continues across the stage in the direction of the control board.

Properly done the switch is undetectable.

While the customer (who now appears to be the magician) struggles with the control board, the magician ducks in the cabinet from the rear. He quickly puts on the top coat; whips the long hair wig from the pocket and fixes it on his head. The long hair covers his face. He slips his head into the cup and sits in the chairs.

The trick is really over now, but the audience doesn't know it. The finish, when the two men change places, is a terrific surprise!

A glance at the drawing will make clear the simplicity of the props and the stage setting. Any good electrician can rig up an effective control board. Two flash boxes are suggested for the explosions.

IMAGINATION PLUS

The whole success of this feat depends upon the performer's acting ability. If he can convincingly handle his invisible properties he will entertain the audience through the build-up stage and amaze it when he reaches the climax.

"Two silks. Both blue. I'll tie them together firmly and put them in this glass", says the performer. He goes through the motions of showing silks, tying them, then tucking them into a glass. The glass is as non-existent as the silks and equally so is the table upon which the wizard says he places the glass.

The performer puts his hand in his pocket and makes believe he removes another silk.

"A yellow handkerchief. Watch." He pantomimes rolling the silk into a ball, then he squeezes the non-existent ball and suddenly extends his hands — "Gone."

He walks across to the make-believe table, picks up the invisible glass and acts as though he is taking one of the invisible silks by a corner.

"Tied between these two silks which you've been watching all the while — the yellow handkerchief."

At his last word a chain of three knotted silks appears at the magician's fingertips. Two blue with a yellow tied between.

Method — A length of thread is tied to one corner of a blue silk in advance.

Starting with the other blue silk, the three tied handkerchiefs are wound snake-like into a tight ball.

This is placed under the performer's left armpit and held in place by a slight pressure of his arm.

The free end of the thread is tied to one of his coat buttons.

When the performer enters he acts as though he really has the items he talks about. When at the conclusion he wants the string of three silks to appear, he slips his left thumb in the looped thread and extends his hand quickly up and forward.

This motion snaps the ball of silk to his finger tips, where a shake of the hand helps it to unroll quickly.

Some performers may find a weight in the lower end of the bottom blue silk useful in causing the bundle to open quickly. Others will be able to perform the feat perfectly without this aid.

Again I emphasize everything depends on the wizard's ability to make believe. A performer with a sense of humor will be able to get much comedy out of this presentation.

Routining

Once you have mastered a series of tricks, the next step is to routine them. Your first and last tricks are the most important. The first should attract interest at once and set the pace for those that follow. The last should be either your most entertaining or most puzzling.

An equal amount of thought is necessary to build an effective intimate routine as a stage act.

Though the best close-up performers seem to work extemporaneously, their very casualness comes only with much practice and careful planning.

A routine should be practiced intact. One trick following logically into the next. If you rehearse them separately you will sometimes encounter difficulties in following one with another. This because bits of preparation may be necessary, or one pocket may be filled with another trick's properties when it is supposed to be empty. Here is a suggested intimate routine:

The Rising Cigarette
The Phantom Flame
Hand to Hand
Fire Money
Burning a Half Dollar

The cigarette in the rising effect is naturally followed by the Phantom Flame feat. Borrowed coins are utilized in the hand to hand pass. Then you show your hocus-pocus powers by producing a larger coin from a match flame. The climax mystery Burning A Half Dollar is the most spectacular feat in the routine and an excellent closer. An alternate close-up program:

New Thimble Routine
The Name Appears
Uneasy Aces
The Double Cut

You are set up for the thimble trick when you begin, thus making it unnecessary to put your hand in your pocket and get the thimbles on your finger tips. The second feat builds interest with the added attraction of contrasting type. Following Uneasy Aces, The Double Cut makes a fine finish.

You will note that these close-up routines are not too lengthy. It is far better to give a show a bit too short than a bit too long. Leave your audience wanting more, as the great vaudevillians used to say.

A routine especially arranged for a performance before a large group in a living room:

Cigarette To Rope

The Double Cut

The Card Revealed

Grandma's Coin Trick

Parlor Telepathy

The rope from the first feat is used for the second. Variety is provided in a card trick, then a coin trick. The mental puzzler is the most impressive of the lot and is given the final spot.

Larger, more spectacular feats are arranged for a typical stage show as follows:

Bang Goes The Bunny

Persistent Radio

Folda Flower

Flower To Silk

Pop-Through Production Frame

Shooting A Card

An assistant is necessary for the Pop-Through Production Frame and the Persistent Radio. By substituting Blended Silk for the former and Together Again for the latter, this routine may be presented by the performer who works alone.

Outlined is a typical mental magic act:

Think Of A City

Action Test

Tap Force-Water Vision

Best-Seller Book Test

Prognostication

The card forced by the tap method is written on the slip pasted to the bottom of the glass in Water Vision. Think of a City is a perfect opening trick and Prognostication is a talk-provoking final test.

These routines may be varied to suit circumstances and the performer's inclinations. They will suggest how other tricks in the book may be arranged to form still more programs.

